7:Lewis S-5 (ca.1940-45) 1948 MDl Syria MDl

3/2 locally by the area of land each irrigates. One canal irrigates 136 acres near Selemiya town; many supply between 20 and 60 acres; and the smallest suffices only for 2.4 acres (near Tell et Tout). The larger canals are nearly all in the low-lying basinlike plain around the town of Selemiya; most of the smaller ones lie toward the northeast. A canal which supplies 68 acres of land in Selemiya delivers 8.8 gallons a second (measured at lowest water level, in October, 1945). There are today in the caza 125 such canals which are in working order and an unknown number which are not in use. These 125 canals irrigate a total of 3060 acres. The map of Moufaqqar (Fig. 3) shows typical modifications and elaborations of the foggara.[4]

HISTORY

175 312 At Misherfe-Qatna, where a modern village occupies the site of a Hittite fortress-city, 18 miles southwest of Selemiya, a foggara-like canal supplied the town in the second millennium before Christ.[5] Most of those in our region date from a much later period, and probably more were constructed from the second century of our era to the sixth than at any other time. Many can be dated by the details of their construction, or by their close association with ruins, or, occasionally, by inscriptions. During these centuries the Selemiya region was a prosperous agricultural district, well supplied with irrigation water. The Roman legacy was added to in the early period of Arab rule,[6] when Selemiya was well known as a pleasant country town, the public buildings of which, especially the baths, rivaled those in great Arab cities. Descendants of the Abbasid Prince Saleh ibn Ali ibn Abdullah ibn Abbas ibn il Motalib lived in Selemiya, and, according to Ya'qubi, writing in 891, Abdullah, the son of Saleh, "conducted thither a stream of water, and dug wells in the land, whereby the saffron grows plentifully." For a period after 893 the town became a center of the Ismaili sect, a circumstance which brought it importance then, and which was to affect the region powerfully a thousand years later.

Throughout the Arab period the water of Selemiya remained famous. As late as the fourteenth century Ahmed the Secretary praised Selemiya as "a charming and rich town, with abundant water and trees. Water comes

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113 [4] See the maps of Qdeym for typical modifications and elaborations of the foggara, Plates III and IV in the atlas volume of R. Mouterde and A. Poidebard: Le limes de Chalcis: Organisation de la steppe en Haute Syrie romaine (Bibliothèque Archéologique et Historique, Vol. 38), 2 vols. (text and atlas), Paris, 1945. See review elsewhere in this number of the *Geographical Review*.

[5] Mesnil du Buisson: Le site archéologique de Mishrifé-Qatna, Paris, 1935.

[6] Information on the Arab period is drawn largely from the article "Salamiya" in the Encyclopaedia of Islam and from Guy le Strange: Palestine under the Moslems, Boston and New York, 1890. The quotation from Ya'qubi is from Le Strange, p. 528.

7: Lewis S-5 (ca. 1940-45) 1948 MDl Syria MDl

to it in aqueducts."[7] Today there are 39 foggaras in use on the lands of 175
Selemiya, and there are also some that are unused. Very few of the foggaras 2121
are modern, so that we may legitimately suppose about the same area to
have been irrigated around the town in the Arab period as at present—
1300 acres. The water was renowned for its purity, as it is today, and Hama,
18 miles away on the muddy Orontes, drank Selemiya water brought to
the city by a foggara from Ain ez Zerqa. Abu el Fida (1273–1331), geogra- 175
pher and king of Hama, caused this canal to be cleaned, and two centuries
later the following inscription from a Hama mosque shows that it was
repaired or cleaned again:[8]

> On fifteenth Gumada I 901 [March 2, 1496] was promulgated the princely, august decree of our master, the great emir, the chief, the governor general, Sayfaddin el Asrafi Qansuh as Sarifi as Sami, governor general of the province of Hama (may God glorify his victory!), prohibiting the diversion of moneys to the profit of the exchequer (may it ever prosper!) and of others, from the funds intended for the aqueduct of Selemiya, and ordering that nothing should be taken from this fund except the wages of the workmen laboring on it. Whoever should renew these exactions, let him be accursed, and may both his father and his Prophet testify against him on judgment day.

By this time the prosperous days of Selemiya were nearly over. Scattered references show that the frontier of settlement and regular agriculture in the region was retreating westward. Tamerlane ravaged all Syria in 1400, and in 1516 the country fell to the Turks. During the next four centuries Syria slowly decayed. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries several great Bedouin tribes moved north out of Arabia into the Syrian Desert and its peripheral regions. After this the steppe and the desert were almost completely beyond the control of the Turkish government, and the frontiers of law, order, and settled life retreated from the edges of these uncontrolled territories. The valuable journals of some English merchants[9] who traveled through the eastern part of our region at the end of the seventeenth century show that, except for Bedouins, it was then practically deserted. The Ismaili inhabitants, according to their descendants' tradition, had left soon after

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[7] See [Maurice] Gaudefroy-Demombynes: La Syrie à l'époque des Mamelouks (Bibliothèque Archéologique et Historique, Vol. 3), Paris, 1923, pp. 77–78. 113

[8] This inscription is from the Great Mosque of Hama, where there are a number of Mamluke decrees, dealing particularly with trade and taxation. It is transcribed in French by Jean Sauvaget in *Bulletin d'Études Orientales de l'Institut Français de Damas*, Vol. 3, 1933, p. 6.

[9] "An Extract of the Journals of Two Several Voyages of the English Merchants of the Factory of Aleppo, to Tadmor, Anciently Call'd Palmyra," *Philos. Trans. Royal Soc. of London*, No. 218, Vol. 19, 1695, pp. 129–147. [Also in "Miscellanea Curiosa," Vol. 3, Containing a Collection of Curious Travels, Voyages, and Natural Histories of Countries, As They Have Been Delivered in to the Royal Society, 2nd edit., revised and corrected by W. Derham, London, 1727 (originally edited by Edmund Halley in 1708), pp. 120–159.]

175 Tamerlane's invasion and were dispersed in other parts of Syria. Of 3200 villages once on the tax rolls of the pashalik of Aleppo, only 400 were said to be inhabited when Volney visited the country in the 1780's.[10] Such peasants as remained in the west of our region suffered from misgovernment, extortion, and raiding by Arab tribes.

166 In the second half of the past century a movement of recolonization
[231] started that is still in progress. Sheep-raising Arab tribes began to settle in
361 villages; peasants came from the districts of Hama and Homs; immigrant
795 Circassians established four villages north of the town of Selemiya. The
312 frontier began to move outward once more, and old foggaras were cleaned
241 and repaired to give irrigation water once again. The strongest and most energetic immigrant group, the pioneers, were Ismaili, led back to their land of a thousand years ago by a group of powerful leaders. They settled first on the site of Selemiya itself about 1870. Today they number 14,000 or more, the majority living in the town and in villages to the east. They chose village sites where old foggaras could be brought into use, and for 75 years they have been extending the area of irrigated land by the restoration of old canals and the digging of new ones. In the last 20 years subsistence agriculture, depending largely on unirrigated grain farming, has given way before a more intensive commercial system, typified by the growing of irrigated cash crops such as seed onions and cotton on individualized hold-
[657] ings. The government has granted money for canal cleaning and swamp drainage. All these factors have contributed to extension of irrigation.

312 Some old canals, however, are still derelict. Some are so ruined that the
[464] cost of repair would be prohibitive. Others may yet be brought back into use, but the will to work is weaker than in the early days of colonization, and now laborers' wages and other expenses have increased. Elsewhere village boundaries cut across old canals. Landowners of the village where a canal rises are loath to let the water flow away to the lands of another village, and thus ancient foggara systems which were perfectly related to the physical environment have been partly replaced by more local schemes of surface canal and ditch irrigation. For example, the canals that rise in Moufaqqar (Fig. 3) could irrigate land and drive mills in Moufaqqar, Tell et Tout, and Selemiya, but they have been so modified that the water is used only in Moufaqqar, and some of it runs to waste. A canal which rises in Tell et Tout but which formerly flowed on to Selemiya land has been blocked, so that its water irrigates Tell et Tout land only.

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113 [10] C.-F. Volney: Travels through Egypt and Syria, in the Years 1783, 1784 & 1785, translated from the French, 2 vols., New York, 1798; reference in Vol. 2, pp. 90-91.

7:Lewis S-5 (ca. 1940-45) 1948 MD1 Syria MD1

ing all this great quantity of Water was past away, so that in about two Hour's Riding we 731
could hardly perceive that there had been any Rain at all.

That floods are an old phenomenon in Selemiya is suggested by two traditional theories, repeated by the inhabitants today, regarding the derivation of the place name. The first theory makes the essential form Sal-Miah, "a flood of water." The other was recorded by Yaqut in 1225:

> Ahmad ibn Yahyâ ibn Jâbir relates that there was a city in Syria, near Salamiyyah, called Al Mûtafikah [The Overturned], which was overwhelmed with all its inhabitants—all except one hundred souls. These left that place, and came and built one hundred houses, and they called the hamlet where they had made their houses Salâm Miyah (Peace for the Hundred), of which the people made Salamiyyah.[22]

As told today, the story is that the "overwhelming" agent was a flood.

The floods are greatly aggravated by soil erosion. Where the trees have 731
been cut, the bushes torn up for fuel, and the grass overgrazed, and especially 134
where slopes have been plowed, there the soil is eroded, and many slopes are now practically bare of soil and vegetation. In summer, soil is shifted by strong winds; in winter, rain washes it into gullies or wadis with steep, crumbling sides. These are tributary to the main streams which do so much damage when they reach the plain. The runoff from bare slopes is faster and more fully loaded than that from vegetated slopes.

PAST AND PRESENT VEGETATION DESTRUCTION

There is no doubt that the trees of Jebel Bilʿas are a remnant of a denser 75
and more extensive growth, though there are no very good grounds for 137
the common assumption that all the Palmyrene ranges were forested in Roman days. The Tablet of Palmyra's fiscal laws of A.D. 137[23] gives reason to suppose that the locality may have furnished considerable quantities of wood and pistachio nuts, and in the same period Jebel Bilʿas and neighboring ranges were used as grazing lands for sheep and horses.[24] The location of
elaborate Romano-Byzantine foggara systems, as at Moufaqqar, directly in [172]
the paths of the floods might seem to indicate that, when the foggaras were constructed, floods were not as serious as they are now.

Old stumps and roots are found within and beyond the present wooded

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[22] Le Strange, op. cit., p. 510.

[23] See J.-B. Chabot: Choix d'inscriptions de Palmyre, Paris, 1922, pp. 23–58.

[24] A. Poidebard: La trace de Rome dans le désert de Syrie.—Le limes de Trajan à la conquête 113
arabe.—Recherches aériennes (1925–1932) (Bibliothèque Archéologique et Historique, Vol. 18), Paris, 1934; M. D. Schlumberger: Une campagne de fouilles au Djebel-el-Chaar en 1934. *Comptes Rendus de l'Acad. des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 1935, pp. 230–236.

7:Lewis S-5 (ca. 1940-45) 1948 MDl Syria MDl

175 137 area. The English merchants who passed through the hills in 1678 noted that Jebel Bil'as was "covered with Trees, which, for the most Part, were the small *Pistacho's* which the *Arabs* pickle with Salt; but eaten green, are good to quench Thirst"; and in 1691 they ascended a ridge to the east of Jebel Bil'as where the tree cover is now sparse and found it "cover'd on both Sides with great plenty of Turpentine-Trees," which grew "very thick and shady," several of them "loaded with a vast Abundance of a small round Nut."[25]

233 341 [181] In spring, when surface water is available and the pasture is excellent, the hills are full of flocks; and several hundred thousand sheep, together with some goats and camels, pasturing each year for about three months cause much damage. Bedouin and peasant shepherd families burn vegetation on the spot, and woodcutters from Selemiya and the villages cut large amounts of the valued slow-burning pistachio wood. Vegetation has been destroyed in these ways since prehistoric times, but at certain periods the process has been quickened. Between 1914 and 1918 the Turkish authorities took great quantities of wood as fuel for the railroads. Local notables say that within living memory trees extended beyond Aquerbat; that is, several miles into the country now cultivated and treeless. The westernmost range, Jebel Shomariye, has lost all its woods, and a ridge to the east, which was "overgrown in some places" with terebinth trees in 1908,[26] is today bare. A new 435 danger to the soil of the hills has resulted from the high grain prices now 161 prevailing, the growing population pressure in the region, and the tendency 178 of Arab tribes to settle down to agriculture; for now increasing areas of land on the western fringe of the hills are being plowed.

080 Malaria control on the plain must clearly be accompanied by soil conservation in the hills, and, ideally, both should be part of a larger scheme of regional rehabilitation. Such a scheme would cover, among other matters, irrigation, malaria control, vegetation conservation, farming practices, and grazing rights. It would mean radical changes in the region; it would require a large capital outlay; and it would necessitate government action of a scale and vigor practically unknown in Syria. It is impossible to discuss here whether such a scheme would be economically justifiable, or possible within the present social and political framework. One can only emphasize that some such comprehensive action must eventually be taken if the problems of the region are to be solved.

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113 [25] "An Extract of the Journals" (*op. cit.*), pp. 132 and 143 [Miscellanea Curiosa, pp. 123 and 137–138].

[26] Alois Musil: Palmyrena, *Amer. Geogr. Soc. Oriental Explorations and Studies No.* 4, 1928, p. 44.

[p. 1]

CHAPTER I

A UNIQUE AND SECRET SECT

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D
Two Historical Fossils:—The Druzes of Syria and the Samaritans of Palestine are two unique communities not to be found elsewhere in the whole world. Like social fossils in an alien environment, these two peoples have survived for hundreds of years in that land rightly described as a "Babel of tongues" and a "museum of nationalities." 795 101 175

The Samaritans are the remnants of the tribes from Assyria and Persia who were transplanted by Sargon some seven hundred years before Christ to take the place of the "ten tribes" who were carried into captivity.[1] They figured in the life of Christ as is illustrated by the case of the "Samaritan woman" and the story of the "good Samaritan." Today they are represented by about one hundred and eighty persons who intermarry among themselves and are becoming rapidly extinct. Their habitat is modern Nāblus (biblical Shechem), and their religion is ancient Judaism mixed with pagan survivals.

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The Druzes have no such clear record to show regarding their origin as a people and as a sect. Their ethnographical origins, no less than their ritual practices and religious beliefs, are shrouded in mystery. Appearing for the first time on the pages of history at Wādi-al-Taym near Mt. Hermon in anti-Lebanon, as professors of the divinity of the sixth Fāṭimite Caliph in Cairo (996–1020 A.D.), the Druzes have lived their semi-independent lives secluded in their mountain fastnesses of Lebanon, unmindful of the progress of the world around them, and almost entirely forgotten by the outside world. 174

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[1] *Cf.* James A. Montgomery, *The Samaritans, the Earliest Jewish Sect* (Philadelphia, 1907), pp. 46–57.

11: Hourani S-4 (no date) 1946 MD1 Syria

Syrian writers and thinkers contributed to the culture of the Greek, the Latin and the Arabic languages. Even to-day, after centuries of stagnation, there are large and important Syrian mercantile communities in North and South America, in West Africa and elsewhere; and Syrian teachers, journalists, doctors and officials are to be found in all the countries of the Arabic world. 177

Above all, Syria is the birthplace of Christianity and Judaism. Ever since Europe became Christian, the principles by which its spiritual and moral life have been guided have come to it clothed in an imagery drawn largely from the beauties and way of life of Syria's countryside; and to the believer her very ground is holy.

5

As far back as our records go, the forces described above can be seen at work. The curtain of history rises on a Syria of which the population is already mainly Semitic, and is continually being reinforced in its Semitic character by fresh waves of immigration. For example, the Canaanites and the Phœnicians entered the country during the third millennium B.C., and the Hebrews and Aramæans in the second. At some time or another all of these peoples established States in different portions of the country. Thus a great part of coastal Syria was for many centuries under the control of the Phœnicians, who established trading centres throughout the Mediterranean and even beyond; and for a time a portion of southern Syria constituted a Hebrew State. 175

These Semitic States deserved well of mankind. The Phœnicians built up a trading system which covered the whole Mediterranean basin, and established colonies as far away from their homeland as France and Spain. But what they did is of small account compared with the record of the Jews. Their intense and stormy history was the channel through which the world came to knowledge of God; a knowledge which bore fruit among them in an unbending passion for righteousness and a matchless poetry of devotion.

From the earliest times Syria was in touch with Egypt, Mesopotamia, Asia Minor and the Ægean world, and usually the greater part of it was under the sway of foreign rulers. The whole or a large portion of the country was subdued successively by the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Hittites, the Persians, and the Macedonian Greeks under Alexander the Great. Each of them established a Government for a time and left some mark on the life of the country. The Greek conquest in the fourth century B.C. had particularly important effects. Under the protection of the Government established by Alexander the Great and maintained with varying degrees of efficiency by his successors, the Seleucids and the Ptolemies, there grew up a number of Greek cities, centres of Hellenic life and thought in the Syrian countryside. They did not merely reflect the culture of their country of origin, but made their own contribution to it : more than one of the leading writers and thinkers of later Greek civilization lived in the Syrian towns. These cities gave as much to Syria as to Greek civilization : a new way of life and thought of which the power was seen in the complete Hellenization of many Syrians and in the development of a hybrid Greco-Syrian culture, a Greek grafted on to a Semitic stock.

6

The Seleucid age was marked by local risings and the appearance of local principalities : for example, the revolt of the Maccabees and the re-establishment of a Jewish kingdom in Palestine. But at length an end was put to the disorder. In the first century B.C. the Syrian possessions of Alexander's successors were conquered by Rome. They remained a Roman and then a Byzantine province for seven hundred years. It was during this period, or at least during the early centuries of it, that the Mediterranean influences in Syrian life attained their greatest strength. The country became an important and integral part of a vast international unit which covered the whole Mediterranean world, and within which men, goods, and ideas could move freely. Both inside and outside their country Syrians found full scope for their talents. Syrian merchants played an important part in the economic life of the Empire, Syrian officials and generals in its political life ; in the third century there were even Emperors from Homs and the Hauran.

The Romans' gift to the country was strong efficient rule, a framework within which the arts of peace could flourish. Their chain of frontier posts on the Euphrates and the edge of the Syrian Desert held back the Parthians to the east. The internal order which they established and their vast public

11: Hourani S-4 (no date) 1946 MD1 Syria ND1

works encouraged commerce and agriculture. Until the last phase there was little popular resistance to their rule, for they did not interfere with the life of the country. The Hellenistic cities were left to govern themselves and remained Greek in culture. They prospered greatly. Antioch, for example, was for a long time the most important town in the eastern half of the Empire; in it and its fellows the Greek language was cultivated by a succession of great writers, for example the poet Meleager and the satirist Lucian. Beside them, but not in opposition to them, there grew up Roman towns with a Latin culture. Beirut, for instance, became one of the centres for the study of the Roman law and produced jurists as notable as Ulpian and Papinian.

In the first phase of Roman rule, the petty Semitic dynasties which had partitioned the country under the later Seleucids were allowed to continue; later, most of them were suppressed and replaced by direct Roman rule. Even so the stream of Semitic influence remained unchecked. The Arabian trade routes still ended in Syria; the bazaar-towns of the interior, like Damascus, retained their Semitic character and their greatness. The language of the countryside was still Semitic: Aramaic for the most part, with an infiltration of Arabic during the later centuries. Strong government prevented the nomads from pillaging the sown land, but encouraged them to abandon the wandering life for that of the peasant. As ever, the infiltration and settlement of the nomads was largely a gradual and almost unnoticed process, but occasionally it attracted the attention of historians, when whole tribes such as the Tanukhids, Ghassanids and Taghlibids immigrated, or with the rise and fall of Semitic vassal states along the desert routes. One such was the Nabatean State in Transjordan, which reached its height at the beginning of the first century A.D., and was destroyed by Trajan at the end; another was the Kingdom of Palmyra in the Syrian Desert, which, in the third century A.D., grew powerful enough to attempt to shake off the sovereignty of Rome and brought on itself its own destruction; a third was the Ghassanid state in the Hauran, Aramaic and Arabic in language, Monophysite Christian in religion, and mixed Arab and Greek in culture, which served Byzantium during the sixth century A.D. as a bulwark against the nomads of Arabia.

It was in the Roman period that Syria most deeply influenced

175 the Mediterranean world; for it was in this period that Syrians contributed most to the religious life of the West. Their contribution took many forms. Indigenous or long-established cults—the worship of the Sun, the cult of Adonis—spread throughout the world of the Mediterranean. Greek philosophy and mystery religions were assimilated and developed; for example, Porphyry and others of the leading Neo-Platonists were Syrians. But above all, it was in Syria that the world of pagan culture was closed for ever by the earthly life and Passion of our Lord. There the Gospel was preached, men first called themselves Christians, and the Church found its first saints and its first martyrs. The Syrian desert was the home of the early monks and hermits; the thinkers of the schools of Antioch and Edessa helped to formulate the doctrines of Christianity. There were among them not only great doctors of the Orthodox Church, like Chrysostom, but also great heresiarchs. Then, as always, Syria was fertile ground for theological controversy: the Nestorian and Monophysite doctrines, and much later the Monothelete, found devotees and martyrs. There are still Christian sects in Syria which cling to some of these doctrines, long since condemned and forgotten by the rest of Christendom.

Christianity spread slowly over the greater part of Syria; and as it spread paganism declined, although it lingered on (and perhaps still lingers in disguise) in remote districts. The Jewish community in Syria also dwindled in numbers, with the dispersion of the Jews over the Mediterranean world. This was a gradual process. In one aspect it was a part of the general Syrian dispersion throughout the Roman Empire, and its main motive was trade. But it was intensified and embittered by the revolt of the Jews against the Roman authority and their repression by Titus (A.D. 70). From that time onwards no autonomous Jewish State arose in Palestine; although there never ceased to be a Jewish community there, and the Jews in the outside world continued to remember Zion by the waters of exile.

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After the third century A.D. the importance and prosperity of Roman Syria began to decline. The once unified Mediterranean world began to disintegrate. Yet even after the western provinces had been detached from the Empire Syria did not lose its connexion with western Europe: Syrian traders, for example, were active in Merovingian France. Although Greek culture continued to exist, it was no longer creative. At the same time Byzantine administration decayed and more than in times past was felt to be oppressive. Popular discontent found expression in the spread of doctrines opposed to those of the official Eastern Orthodox Church. The Byzantine rulers also neglected to maintain the defences which their predecessors had established. This was the more dangerous because of the rise of the Sassanid Empire in Persia during the third century. In the series of Perso-Roman wars, Syria was a base and often a battle-ground, and was more than once occupied by Persian armies. But it was always re-occupied by Byzantine forces, and finally it was not to the Persians that Syria fell. While the two Empires had been wasting one another's strength, a new power had arisen in Arabia. The Prophet Muhammad had brought a new force into the history of Asia, with his gospel of monotheism, revelation and the Day of Judgement. In a few years his followers had conquered and united the Arabian peninsula. In 633 they invaded Syria. By 640, Damascus, Jerusalem and the other great cities had fallen to the invaders, the Byzantine armies had been defeated and had withdrawn, and Syria had become part of the Moslem Empire.

The conquest was all the easier since the Arabization of Syria had already begun. There were Arabic-speaking tribes in the country; and although they were Christians, many were Nestorians or Monophysites and therefore hostile to the Byzantine Government and the Orthodox Church. After the conquest the process of Arabization was carried a step farther by the settlement in the country of many of the invading Arab Moslems, and the adoption of Arabic, now the language of the ruling class, by some of the Semitic elements already settled there before the conquest. It was a gradual process; Aramaic lingered on for many centuries, especially in Lebanon, and is not yet completely dead. The parallel process of conversion to Islam was also slow. The establishment of a Moslem Government, and the ties of race existing between the Moslem invaders and settlers and many of the other elements in the population, were inducements to conversion; but neither the conquest nor the early period of Moslem rule was marked by religious persecution, or by proselytization on a large scale, except among the Arab tribes. Christians and Jews, it is true, were regarded as in a sense standing outside the community; they were not allowed to carry weapons, to bear witness against Moslems in courts of law, or to marry Moslem women; and they were subject to special measures of taxation. But they were permitted to retain their beliefs and their property, to worship as they pleased, and to manage the internal affairs of their communities according to their own laws and customs. All Christian sects were treated alike; for the heterodox, the Moslem conquest meant a greater toleration than they had previously known. For several centuries Christianity continued to be the faith of a large proportion of the population; in north Lebanon, in the great towns and elsewhere, large Christian communities have continued to exist until to-day. Christian culture also flourished for a time. In the century or so after the Moslem conquest, Christian Syria gave to the world five Popes, the last of the great theologians of the Eastern Church, John of Damascus, and the greatest Christian Arab poet, Akhtal.

Within a generation of Syria's becoming part of the Moslem Empire, it had become the Empire's centre. In 661 the governor of the country, Muawiya, proclaimed himself Caliph, after the murder of his predecessor and antagonist, the Caliph Ali. From that date until the middle of the eighth century Damascus was the capital of the Umayyad Caliphate, of which the territories were gradually extended until they stretched from Spain and Morocco in the west to central Asia in the east. This Empire was largely administered by Syrians, Christian as well as Moslem; and Syrian soldiers bore the burden of its defence and of its wars with Byzantium.

In spite of its expansion and the growing complexity of its organization, the Caliphate remained in a true sense Moslem and Arab under the Umayyad dynasty. Arabs constituted the ruling class; Arabic soon replaced Greek as the language of administration in those regions which had formerly been Byzantine provinces; and Arabic literature found a home at the Umayyad court. But at the same time Islam and the Arab way of life did not remain unaffected by the Greco-Aramaic civilization of Syria. The Moslem conquerors were themselves conquered, gradually and up to a certain point, by the culture of the intellect and senses, the social organization and the administrative system which they found in Syria. They gained

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in technical mastery and maturity of the intellect ; they lost the pristine simplicity of their faith and way of life.

Thus the tension between Mediterranean and Semitic influences continued ; and by its side other conflicts developed. There was hostility between the stock of the original Arab conquerors and the Arabized and converted Syrians, the 'Mawali', and between both of them and the elements still unassimilated in language and religion. Among the Arabs themselves there were conflicts between tribes and parties, the greatest of them that of the Qaisite and Yemenite factions, which persisted in various disguises until comparatively recent times. Islam itself split up. The struggle between Muawiya and Ali did not end with the latter's death ; it was carried on by his sons and by his adherents, the 'Shi'ah' or 'partisans' of Ali ; theological dissensions were added to the original political differences ; and the Shi'i Moslems have remained distinct from the orthodox Sunnis until to-day.

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A combination of religious, regional and dynastic conflicts led in the eighth century to the replacement of the Umayyad by the Abbasid Caliphs, and of Damascus by Baghdad as the capital of the Caliphate. Syria was never again the centre of the Moslem world ; Syrians no longer filled the great positions in the government. They were indeed oppressed by their new rulers, and more than once revolted against them. This change in the political balance was followed by a shift in the centre of western Asian trade, seen in the growth of the commercial importance of Basra. Because of these changes and the devastation of the wars with Byzantium, the prosperity of Syria began to decline and its population to decrease.

Under the Abbasids certain processes which had begun with the Moslem conquest of Syria came virtually to completion. The Arabic language became practically universal ; and Islam became the religion of the majority of the inhabitants, partly through fresh immigration from Arabia and partly because of the many inducements to conversion. Many Christians moved from the interior to the safety of the Lebanese mountains ; for example, about the ninth century the Maronites established themselves in northern Lebanon. The absorption of Greco-Aramaic culture and the development of an Islamic culture were carried farther. At the same time, 175 the original Islamic religious impulse was growing weaker; and with its decline and the gradual decay of the Abbasid Caliphate new tendencies began to appear. The Byzantine armies passed from defence to attack, and harassed and at times occupied northern Syria. The country was divided by the rise of local dynasties (both Arab and Turkish) and heterodox Islamic sects. Of the dynasties perhaps the greatest was the Hamdanid, which ruled northern Syria during the tenth century, and was sometimes at war with Byzantium and sometimes tributary to it. At its court or in its domains there flourished some of the greatest figures of Arabic culture—the poets al-Mutanabbi and Abu'l-Ala al-Ma'ari, the anthologist Abu'l-Faraj al-Isfahani and the philosopher al-Farabi. Of more lasting importance were the new Islamic sects which developed out of Shi'ism in the ninth and subsequent centuries[1]: the Alawis, the Druzes, and the obscurely interrelated Carmathian and Isma'ili movements, which were not only movements of belief, of thought and of social reform, but also initiatory secret societies with political aims. These movements first came into Syria from Iraq, and then from Egypt under the leadership of the Fatimid dynasty during the later tenth century. The Fatimids held precarious and unstable sway over the country for a time. Finally, in the eleventh century, the Seljuq Turks from central Asia began to assert themselves in Syria as an independent force, at first in the name of the 'Great Seljuq' Sultans in the East, but later on their own account. With the establishment of their State, Syria virtually ceased to be part of the Abbasid Empire. The Seljuq State itself, however, did not last long; it soon split into two minor dynasties, at Aleppo and Damascus.

9

At the end of the eleventh century a new element was introduced into a country already divided between Seljuq Turks in the north and centre, Fatimids in the south, and petty dynasties like the Tanukhids in Lebanon. The Crusading armies from western Europe invaded Syria and conquered the coastal regions and some portions of the interior. In the conquered areas they established a series of feudal states, Edessa, Antioch, Tripoli and Jerusalem, with a European ruling class, maintained by intermittent reinforcements from

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[1] See Chapter VII.

175

the West, but tending in course of time to mingle with the indigenous inhabitants and adopt their ways; rulers and soldiers were largely French by origin, the commercial class mainly Italian. The indigenous Christians were encouraged to become Catholics; it was in this period that the Maronites entered into communion with Rome. As for the Moslems, in general they were treated tolerantly. In spite of wars between the Crusaders and the Moslem Governments in the interior, the Crusading States were the source of a fruitful interchange of goods and ideas between Latin Europe and Moslem Asia: the West derived from Syria not only new economic processes and products but new ideas and a stimulus to its imaginative life.

Even at their zenith, during the first half of the twelfth century, the Crusading States never reached as far into the heart of Syria as Damascus. During the second half of that century even their hold upon the coastal regions was challenged, first by Zengi, the Turkish ruler of Mosul, and his son Nur ad-Din, and then by the great Saladin. By origin a Kurd, Saladin was sent by Nur ad-Din to Egypt, and after his master's death gradually extended his sway over the greater part of the eastern Moslem world. His kingdom covered most of Syria, including the Holy Places, his conquest of which occasioned the third Crusade at the end of the twelfth century. To some extent this Crusade revived the fortunes of the Christian States, but only for a short time. Throughout the first half of the thirteenth century Syria was torn by internal dissensions and the rise and fall of petty principalities, both Christian and Moslem. These principalities were powerless to resist the Mongol invaders, who in 1260 swept all before them until they were defeated on the Palestinian coast by Baibars, later the Mamluke Sultan of Egypt. The Mamlukes profited by their victory, and gradually enlarged their control over the country. Acre, the last Crusading fortress, fell to them in 1291.

For the next two centuries Syria remained under Mamluke rule. It was a time of decay and of unrest. Twice more the country was ravaged by Mongol invaders: by the Ilkhans in the late thirteenth century and a hundred years later by Tamerlane, who sacked Aleppo and Damascus and carried away their artisans to Samarqand. Several times there were local risings, which were suppressed by the Mamlukes: for example, the great insurrections of the Druzes and Shi'is in

175 Lebanon at the end of the thirteenth century. The period was one of economic decline, partly because of war and unrest, and partly because of the geographical discoveries of the fifteenth century, which changed the course of the world's great trade routes; but there was still a certain trade with Europe, carried on by Italian merchants. The population decreased alike in wealth and in numbers. To the economic weakness of the country was added the decay of Mamluke rule; and when the Ottoman Turks attacked Syria in 1516 they conquered it without difficulty.

10

From 1516 until 1918 Syria remained under Ottoman rule, and part of an Empire which included at its height the Balkans, much of central Europe, Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, part of the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa. Of the first three centuries of this rule there is little to say. In general they were centuries of stagnation. The Ottoman conquest did not seriously affect the racial composition of the people of Syria, their language or their way of life. Few Turks settled in the country, but the infiltration of nomads from Arabia continued. It was during this period that some of the great tribes, of which the descendants still, as nomads or as peasants, inhabit a large part of the country, first entered it: the Shammar and then various Anazah tribes, who drove the Shammar across the Euphrates and established their ascendancy over the Syrian Desert. Nor did the Ottoman conquest greatly affect the political structure of Syria. The country was divided into several Pashaliks, those of Damascus, Aleppo and Tripoli, and later of Saida; but often the authority of the Pashas was only effective in and around the great towns in which garrisons were stationed. Men gave formal reverence to the Sultan, who had also arrogated to himself the title of Caliph or head of the Islamic community; but the limits of his Government's action were narrow. In practice customary law was supreme, and social power was in the hands of the feudal lords, on whom the Ottoman rulers, like their predecessors, mainly relied for the maintenance of local order and the collection of taxes.

Such being the structure of Ottoman rule, it was possible for local dynasts of ability to extend their domains and become virtually independent. Perhaps the greatest of them was the Druze Amir Fakhr ad-Din, a member of the Maani dynasty which governed Lebanon throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the course of the fifty years of his ascendancy (1586–1635) he extended his territories far beyond Lebanon, and increased their prosperity by his encouragement to agriculture and to trade with Europe. He was tolerant in religious matters, protecting Christians and Europeans. He even attempted, with support from some European rulers, completely to throw off the suzerainty of the Sultan. Forced in 1613 to flee to Italy, he returned to Syria after a few years, and continued to dominate a great part of the country until captured and killed by the Turks.

His death was followed by the decline of the Maanis, who were succeeded in 1697 by the Shihabis. They ruled throughout the eighteenth century; it was a time of upheaval in the life of Lebanon, marked on the one hand by the gradual spread of the Christian peasantry from northern Lebanon southwards into districts which had previously been wholly inhabited by Druzes, and on the other by intensive conflicts among the Druze nobility. These were conflicts of families and factions, the lineal descendants of the ancient Arabian dispute of Qays and Yemen. Many of the defeated faction emigrated from Lebanon to the hilly district beyond the plain of the Hauran, now known as Jebel Druze. In the remainder of Syria no less than in Lebanon the eighteenth century was marked by conflict and unrest. Finally a great part of the country fell into the hands of the Bosnian Jazzar, Pasha of Acre, who ruled it ruthlessly and cruelly from 1775 until 1804.

In general, the first three centuries of Ottoman rule were a period of economic decline. The population continued to shrink; a harsh system of taxation and the uncertainty of life had their effect upon agriculture; and Syria no longer lay on the main trade route from Europe to further Asia. But commerce was not completely stagnant; trade with many of the surrounding countries was made easier by the incorporation of Syria into the Ottoman Empire, and at times the desert routes were prosperous. Damascus was still in decline, but Aleppo was one of the great centres of the internal trade of the Empire, and also of the trade between the Empire and Europe. Here and in other Syrian towns grew up colonies of French, Italian and other European merchants, through whose hands passed most of the trade between Europe and the Levant. These colonies were granted a special status and privileges by

175 the Sultans. The first such grant was made to the French communities by the Franco-Ottoman concordat of 1535, which together with subsequent concordats served as the basis not only of the foreign 'Capitulations' in the Ottoman Empire, but also of the French claim to protect the Catholic Christians of the Levant.[1]

It was not only traders who came from the West. From the seventeenth century onwards Catholic missionaries were active, particularly among the indigenous Christian communities: Franciscans (the traditional custodians of the Catholic Holy Places), Jesuits and others. They slowly built up the various Uniate Churches, Eastern in rite but in communion with Rome. They gave the country its first modern schools, although on a very modest scale. More important perhaps than the schools founded in Syria was the Maronite College established at Rome to educate the Maronite clergy and draw closer their links with Western Catholicism. It was this College which had the honour of educating Joseph Assemani, Maronite Archbishop, Librarian of the Vatican and one of the earliest of the great modern orientalists.

II

The beginning of the nineteenth century found Syria a decayed and half-deserted land. After the rule of Jazzar had come to an end, Ottoman administration only functioned effectively in the large towns, where the garrisons of Janissaries were stationed, in a section of the coastal strip and certain portions of the countryside. A large part of the country was governed by local chieftains, ruling by virtue of descent or ability and practically autonomous; they held their fiefs no longer on condition of performing military service, but on that of collecting taxes for the Sultan's Government. Both the local dynasts and the Turkish Pashas were largely uncontrolled in their dealings with their subjects and with one another. Oppressed by rulers, by tax-farmers and by feudal lords, the peasants had neither incentive nor opportunity to scrape more than a bare living from the soil. The Beduin were virtually uncontrolled, and were a perpetual menace to the settled areas. What prosperity the country still possessed came less from agriculture than from the flow of commerce through the principal towns.

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[1] See Chapter VIII.

Mount Lebanon was an oasis of order amid the chaos. It was ruled by the strong and ruthless Amir Bashir of the Shihabi family, who reigned from 1789 to 1840 almost as an independent monarch. He established law and security, preserved the character of Lebanon as an asylum of refuge, extended its boundaries far into the territory of the neighbouring Pashaliks and encouraged the trade of Beirut.

Lebanon was quiet during the first thirty years of the century, but beneath the surface important changes were taking place. There was a change in the relationship between Druzes and Maronites. The northern part of Lebanon was inhabited mainly by Maronites and other Christians, the southern by Druzes. The Christians were numerically preponderant and had for some generations been spreading southwards into districts formerly wholly Druze but now mixed in population. Although the Druzes were in a minority, and their numbers had been diminished by emigration to Jebel Druze in the eighteenth century, their feudal lords had for centuries been the dominant force in Lebanon, thanks to the strength of their communal spirit and organization. In the days of Bashir, the Christian peasants continued to spread southwards and the Druzes to emigrate from Lebanon to Jebel Druze. New difficulties also arose. To fortify his own power, the Amir curbed the power of the Druze notables and encouraged the latent tension between the sects. Within each sect, too, there was unrest. Among the Maronites there was a movement of the peasants against their lords, and a struggle for predominance between the lords and the clergy. The Druzes for their part continued to be torn by the strife of families. To add to these factors, a change for the worse was taking place in the economic position of Lebanon.

12

Into this stagnant world a new force was about to enter: Syria, like the rest of the Ottoman Empire, was drawn into the orbit of Western life during the nineteenth century.

The impact of the West was first apparent in the political sphere. Already in the eighteenth century it had been clear that the Ottoman Empire had passed its zenith; its European frontiers were contracting, and its hold over most of North Africa was precarious. But now it became increasingly probable that the Empire would collapse. Its collapse would alter the

175 political relationship between the European States. It therefore became expedient for the Great Powers either to hasten or to delay the collapse, according to their conception of their interests, and at all events to secure a position of paramount influence in the Empire. During the earlier part of the century the Powers mainly interested were Great Britain, France and Russia ; and in the pursuit of their interests all three attempted not only to secure a paramount influence over the Ottoman Government in Constantinople, but also to establish a special connexion with one or other of the peoples of the Empire, and of Syria among its provinces. The French had for some generations possessed such a connexion with the Maronites and other Catholic Christians ; at the end of the eighteenth century the Russians began to claim a special right of protection over the Greek Orthodox Christians in both the European and the Asiatic parts of the Empire ; and in the course of the nineteenth century Great Britain tried to cultivate the friendship of the Druzes. Thus motives of high policy impelled the Powers to intervene in the internal life of Syria, which had for so long been almost untouched by influences from the West.

The first great blow to the traditional life came in the last years of the eighteenth century, when Napoleon marched northwards from his newly-won base in Egypt. His advance was resisted by Jazzar as representative of the Ottoman Sultan. In order to weaken this resistance Napoleon tried to stir the Sultan's subjects into revolt. He had some success with the Maronites and Shi'is, none with the Sunnis, who remained hostile to him, nor with the Amir Bashir, who remained cautiously neutral. For a time the French army moved without hindrance up the coastal road ; but the resistance of Jazzar in Acre, supported by a British fleet, compelled Napoleon to abandon the campaign (1799).

13

Had Napoleon not been defeated, he might have awakened Syria from its long sleep. The work which he might have done had to wait thirty years. In 1831–2 Syria was occupied by the armies of Ibrahim Pasha, the son of Muhammad Ali, the ruler of Egypt under the nominal suzerainty of the Sultan. Muhammad Ali wanted Syria partly to make use of its resources in men and wood, and partly as a stepping-stone towards Constantinople and domination of the whole Ottoman Empire.

In 1833 the Sultan agreed to Muhammad Ali's control of Syria, and for the next few years it was ruled by Ibrahim. These years may be regarded as the beginning of the modern age for the country. For the first time in centuries it was given a centralized Government strong enough to hold separatist tendencies in check, and a system of taxation regular and comparatively rational, although burdensome. The judiciary was reformed, and greater equality than had previously existed was established between Moslems and others. The Government founded schools and permitted foreign missionaries to do so. The improved state of public order encouraged commerce and cultivation.

175

In spite of these innovations, at first Ibrahim Pasha tried not to break with the traditions of the country but to base his domination upon the local landowning and ruling families, and especially upon the Amir Bashir. For a time his rule was popular with a large part of the inhabitants. Later, however, it became unpopular: with the landowners because he tried to limit their political and social predominance, and with the peasants on account of the forced labour, conscription, compulsory disarmament and heavy taxation to which he found it necessary to resort. At the same time Muhammad Ali's control of Syria was disliked by the Sultan and by Great Britain and Russia. They conceived it to be in their interest to maintain the Ottoman Empire and were not inclined to allow the establishment of a new mushroom kingdom in the eastern Mediterranean, the more so because of the friendly relations between Muhammad Ali and France.

In 1839 the Sultan brought matters to a crisis by ordering his armies to invade Syria. They were met at Nizib by the forces of Ibrahim Pasha, and were decisively defeated. The way to Constantinople now seemed open to Ibrahim. At this point the Powers intervened. With the exception of France they gave their backing to the Sultan's demand that Ibrahim should evacuate Syria north of Acre (1840). At the same time they sent arms to the discontented inhabitants of Syria and particularly to the Druzes and Maronites of Lebanon. When Ibrahim refused to agree to the Sultan's demand, a British expedition was landed on the coast, and Lebanon rose in revolt, although Bashir remained faithful to Ibrahim. Ibrahim was driven from Syria, which was restored to the Sultan; and the Amir was forced to abdicate.

Ibrahim went, but something of his work remained. He had opened Syria to Western merchants and travellers as it had not been open for generations, and he had helped to shake the Empire out of its long torpor. The rest of the century saw a determined if crude effort by the Ottoman Government to reform and modernize its structure ; it was initiated by the Sultan Mahmud II and carried further by his successor Abdul-Majid. To some extent this effort took the shape of formal acts designed to create a system of political standards and rights such as the Western Powers possessed. Thus in 1839, under the influence of the British Ambassador, Stratford de Redcliffe, the Sultan Abdul-Majid issued the ' Gulhane ' decree, which guaranteed security and public trial to all citizens, established a just system of imposing and collecting taxes, provided for equality of civil rights between members of the different religious communities and extended the obligation of military service to all alike. The next year a penal code was enacted, based upon the principle of equality before the law. In 1856, after the Crimean War (of which the rivalry of France and Russia for control of the Holy Places in Palestine had been a contributory cause), the Powers compelled the Sultan to issue a further edict, the ' Hatti Humayun ', defining and guaranteeing the spiritual and temporal privileges of the non-Moslem communities, and granting their members equality of civil rights with Moslems. Finally, in 1876, the Sultan issued a Parliamentary constitution, which was however suspended soon after its first application.

These steps were taken partly at least to appease or to impress the Governments of Europe, and were only very imperfectly carried out. More important, if less obtrusive, was the attempt to replace the old system of decentralized feudal government by a modern centralized and uniform administration. The first step to this was the creation of a professional army with Western training and equipment ; this was undertaken with considerable success by the Sultan Mahmud II. Thus it became possible for subsequent Sultans to try to break down the old autonomies and curb the power of the local dynasties : by the abolition of tax-farming and other measures designed to reduce the social power of the landholders and, where necessary, by military expeditions against too powerful subjects. The attempt was successful in some parts of the country, for example

11: Hourani S-4 (no date) 1946 MDI Syria MDI

with the Kurds and Turcomans in the north and the Alawis around Latakia; unsuccessful in others, for example with the Druzes of Jebel Druze, who, in spite of expeditions against them in 1876, 1896 and 1911, and of occasional acts of submission on their part, retained their administrative and judicial autonomy and their exemption from military service.

For purposes of administration the country was divided into the Vilayets of Damascus and Aleppo; subsequently a separate Vilayet of Beirut was created. A Sanjaq of Jerusalem and a Mutassarifat of Dair az-Zur, attached directly to the central Government at Constantinople, were also established.

15

In one region the policy of centralization was tried and failed. The social and religious situation in Lebanon at the beginning of the nineteenth century has already been described. The restlessness which existed was increased by the distribution of arms and the rising of 1840, as also by the support given by the French Government to the Maronites and by the British to the Druzes. After the withdrawal of Ibrahim Pasha and the restoration of Ottoman rule, the Sultan's Government set itself deliberately to foment religious conflict in order to make the traditional autonomy of Lebanon unworkable and so to create an excuse for the establishment of direct Ottoman rule over the Mountain. Its task was all the easier in that Bashir was succeeded by a weak member of the Shihabi family, who was unable to maintain order.

The first disturbances occurred in 1841, when civil war broke out between Maronites and Druzes. The Powers intervened and persuaded the Ottoman Government to promulgate a new constitution for Lebanon, dividing it into two districts, the northern under a Maronite and the southern under a Druze governor. The governors were to be appointed by the central Government, but the administrative privileges of the Mountain were guaranteed. The new system was set up; but a few years later, in 1845, civil war broke out once more. The Government re-imposed order and partially disarmed the population; in this as in other matters, however, it favoured the Druzes at the expense of the Maronites. It also made certain changes in the new administrative system, with the purpose of limiting the power of the feudal landlords and tax-farmers.

11: Hourani S-4 (no date) 1946 MD1 Syria MD1

175 During the next years social and religious tension continued to increase; it was encouraged by the weakness of the governors, who proved unable to control the feudal lords. Finally, in 1857, matters came to a head in the purely Maronite districts of north Lebanon, where the peasants revolted against their lords. Led by priests, by younger sons of landowning families and by popular leaders of whom the most notable was Yusuf Karam, they established a peasant Government, put an end to the prerogatives of the nobility and divided up the large estates.

In the districts of central and southern Lebanon, where the population was partly Druze and partly Christian, the final outbreak was later in coming, and took a more complex form: it was both a religious conflict between the Druze and Maronite communities and a social conflict between Maronite peasants and Druze lords. In 1860, great disturbances broke out. Some thousands of Christians were killed in different parts of Lebanon by the Druzes with the connivance of the Turkish authorities, and thousands more in Damascus by the Moslem mob, in spite of the efforts of certain Moslem notables to restrain them. At this point the European Powers intervened. By international agreement, the Emperor Napoleon III sent a military expedition to Lebanon. It remained in occupation of the district for nine months, but had little to do, since the Ottoman Government had already taken steps to restore order and punish some of those held to be responsible. At the same time an international commission was set up to investigate the disturbances, to supervise the punishment of those who had instigated them and the indemnification of those who had suffered, and to make proposals for the future organization of the Mountain.

The Commission, which met first in Beirut and then in Constantinople, drew up a Statute formalizing and defining the autonomy of Lebanon. By the terms of this Statute, which was promulgated in 1861 and finally ratified in 1864, Lebanon was to be administered by a Christian Ottoman governor appointed by the Ottoman Government with the consent of the Powers, and directly responsible to it. He was to have full executive powers and to be assisted by a central administrative Council, on which the more important religious communities were to be equitably represented. They were similarly to be represented in the local administration. Lebanon was to have its own judiciary

and police force. Feudal privileges were abolished, and all were 175
declared equal before the law.

Until the First World War Lebanon was ruled in accordance with this Statute. It was on the whole a period of increasing prosperity. It is true that unrest was not immediately stilled. The abolition of feudal privileges raised new social problems, and thus led to renewed agitation among the Maronite peasants, whose leader, Yusuf Karam, was finally sent away from Lebanon; and discontented Druzes continued to emigrate to Jebel Druze. But gradually the traditional state of religious toleration returned. The governors, who were Christians from outside Lebanon, were in general efficient and humane, and defended the autonomy of the Mountain against the attempts of the Sultan to infringe it. Agriculture revived, roads were built, schools were opened, and Western civilization extended its sway.[1]

16

For the rest of the century the Ottoman Empire continued to be the object of European interest and rivalry. The tension between Great Britain and Russia which was temporarily relaxed by the Treaty of Berlin in 1878 did not directly concern Syria. But the struggle between Russia and France for control of the Holy Places in Palestine, which had been the occasion of the Crimean War, was still not altogether ended. By its side new rivalries grew up. Italy disputed France's rights in regard to the Catholic communities and Holy Places; and towards the end of the century Germany began to stake her claim. In the reign of Abdul-Hamid II (1876–1909) German influence over the Ottoman Government grew continuously and gradually replaced that which Great Britain had once possessed. The Berlin to Baghdad railway, which German enterprise partially constructed, skirted the northern edge of Syria and might well, had not the First World War broken out, have served as a means of German penetration into that and other provinces of the Empire.

17

Western influence thus played an important part in the 175
political life of the country; it played an even more important 177
one in the social and economic changes of the century. Syrian

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[1] The exact boundaries of the sanjaq of Lebanon were never clearly established.

175 life in all its aspects underwent a gradual and still incomplete
177 process of Westernization. The tastes and habits of the population were profoundly influenced by the inflow of goods from the West; their beliefs and way of thinking still more profoundly so by the spread of Western culture.

175 The reception of Western civilization was helped by the
177 emigration of many thousands of Syrians to other countries.
167 In general they came more often from Lebanon than from other regions, and they were more often Christians than Moslems. Their motives for leaving their country were various. Many of the Christians desired to escape from a predominantly Moslem environment, especially after the events of 1860; many among both Christians and Moslems found Ottoman rule too oppressive to be borne; young men educated in the mission-schools wished for opportunities and rewards greater than their native land could offer; some were attracted by the legendary promise of the New World, its wealth and its freedom; and others went abroad simply because their relations and friends had already settled there.

167 There were two main roads of emigration. The one led to
175 Egypt and the Sudan and, to a lesser extent, the other Arabic-speaking countries. This road had always been open, but it was rendered more attractive by the establishment of British control over Egypt and the Sudan. The British authorities needed subordinate officials who spoke Arabic and understood the ways of the Near East, but who were also acquainted with Western methods of thought and administration. They found what they needed in the graduates of the Syrian mission-schools, who for half a century loyally and effectively filled a variety of positions in the Governments of Egypt and the Sudan. Thousands of other Syrians went to Egypt as merchants, doctors and journalists. They progressed, and some among them played a considerable part in the cultural life of the country. Being largely an urban middle-class community, partly Christian and suspected of an excessive attachment to Great Britain or at least to the West, the Syrian-Egyptians have not always been liked by the Egyptians; but many of them have become Egyptians in nationality and sentiment, and at least the Moslems among them may become assimilated in a generation or two to the population among whom they are living.

The Syrian-Egyptians are numbered in tens of thousands,

but those who have followed the other road, to North and /67
South America, to Australia and to other of the more distant /95
parts of the world, must be counted in hundreds of thousands. The great majority of them started as retail traders on a small scale, but many took to wholesale trade and to the manufacture of textiles and other goods. The process of taking root was harder for them than for those who went to Egypt, since it involved learning new languages and acquiring new ways of life; but they have already been assimilated to a considerable extent, and the large Syrian colonies in the United States, Brazil and the Argentine, with smaller ones in other countries, have become prosperous, loyal and respected elements in the communities in which they are living. Most of them have given up all but a sentimental attachment to their country of origin, and there seems to be no obstacle to their ultimate complete assimilation, the more so since the flow of emigrants to the countries of the New World has greatly diminished during the last two decades. It has been partly diverted to British and French West Africa, much of the internal trade of which is now in Syrian hands.

The consequences of the emigration for Syria were both /75
good and bad. They were bad in so far as it was the more /67
talented and enterprising of the country's youth who went /77
abroad, during the period of their greatest energy and often for ever. On the other hand, the level of prosperity was raised by the remittances which successful emigrants sent home to their relatives, and by the savings which they brought back with them. Also, they introduced new ideas, and, what was even more important, the example of a new and in many respects attractive way of life. These ideas, this example and the bare fact that Syrians were prosperous and happy in foreign lands, deeply influenced the attitude of Syria to the West. All this was especially true of Lebanon, since it supplied so large a proportion of the emigrants.

18

Western influences also came by way of education. Students /75
began to go abroad, to seek the new learning in the schools of /77
Europe and America; and Western schools became ever more 871
numerous in the Near East. The greater number of them were 777
established and maintained by foreign missionary institutions. Jesuit and other Catholic schools had existed since the

177 seventeenth century, but it was only in the eighteen-thirties that
175 conditions arose in which their numbers and influence could
871 increase; and it was during the same decade that American
977 Protestant schools became important. During the second half of the century a new step was taken, with the creation in 1866 of the institution which subsequently became the American University of Beirut; nine years later, in 1875, the Jesuit college which was later to become the Université de S. Joseph, was transferred to Beirut from Ghazir, where it had been established in 1843. Towards the end of the century Russian, German and other religious schools were established, the French Mission Laïque began its work, and the Ottoman Government itself started to create schools and colleges on Western lines.

175 The spread of Western education, the growth of commercial
177 relations with Western countries and other factors brought
191 into existence a class of people who knew French, English and other European languages, often as well as and sometimes better than their native Arabic. Knowledge of these languages gave them the key to a whole new world of ideas and images.

175 The spread of Western ideas, the rediscovery and publication
177 of the Arab classics by Western orientalists, the introduction
814 of the printing-press and the establishment of newspapers and periodicals led to a revival of Arabic literature. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the creative use of the classical Arabic language had almost entirely ceased. The old authors were scarcely read; such poetry and prose as were produced were imitations of archaic models; except for religious schools, which mainly confined themselves to the memorization of the Quran, no sort of literary education existed. But gradually what had been dead came to life again. Around the mission-schools in Beirut gathered a group of Syrian writers, most of them Christians, who set themselves to evolve a modern Arabic idiom and style suitable for the expression of Western ideas, and to use the instrument thus created to familiarize the Arabs with the civilization of Europe and to render them conscious of their own problems. At the same time another group was being created in Cairo by means of the schools, educational missions and translations initiated or encouraged by Muhammad Ali and his successors; similar to the Beirut group in many ways, it differed from it by a greater concern with the

question of Islam and modern civilization, and a greater caution 175 177 814 in accepting ideas and innovations from Europe.

These two groups, and smaller, less important groups in other towns, have laid the foundations of a new Arabic literature. To a great extent their work has been preparatory. The Arabic language has been rendered more adequate and flexible, for example by the adoption or invention of technical terms. Western ideas have been spread through translations and works of popularization. New literary forms have been introduced—the poetic drama, the novel, the romantic autobiography—and at the same time old forms have been revived. In addition to the advances in form, the subject-matter of literature has been extended. Different groups have set themselves to expound subjects not hitherto treated : the relations between religion and secular culture, the position of women, the method of empirical science, and so on. In all this preparatory work, the influence of French and English thought and literature has been great and obvious.

Modern Arabic literature has so far produced nothing of 538 great originality, nothing of much interest to the outer world. But there have been a number of honest, hard-working and courageous writers, who have deserved well of the Arabic-speaking peoples : for example, the religious thinker Muhammad Abdu, the social reformer Qasim Amin, the essayist al-Manfaluti, the poets Ahmad Shawqi and Hafiz Ibrahim, the playwright and novelist Tawfiq al-Hakim and the scholar Taha Husain.

These names are all those of Egyptians, and Cairo is the unquestioned centre of Arabic literature. But there have been very important Syrian and Lebanese writers, many of whom it is true worked for most of their lives in Egypt, although others remained in their own country. They include the scholars and poets of the Bustani and Yaziji families ; the religious reformer Rashid Rida ; the fathers of Arabic journalism Shidiaq, Nimr, Sarruf, Zaidan and Taqla ; the poet Khalil Mutran ; the best of women writers in Arabic, May Ziadah ; the traveller Amin Rihani ; and the mystic Khalil Jibran. The last two spent many years in the United States and wrote much of their work in English. They are the most distinguished of a group of Syrian-American writers who have planted in the new world a root of Arabic literature, which in spite of its qualities can hardly hope to survive a generation.

19

175 At the beginning of the present century Syria had ceased to be the stagnant land of a hundred years before. Lebanon in particular, and the rest of the country to a smaller extent, were in process of becoming Westernized and regaining their prosperity. The long decline in the population had ceased and been replaced by a steady increase, although during the nineteenth century there had been little immigration, apart from that of Zionist Jews towards the end of the century. The standard of living had risen. Commerce with the external world was greater than at any time during the Ottoman period, in spite of the diversion of transit trade to the Suez Canal. The country possessed several thousand kilometres of railways and modern roads, most of them built by French companies. Nowhere was the change so marked as in Beirut. In 1800 it had been a decayed town of a few thousand inhabitants, mainly Moslems. By 1900 it had become one of the main centres of trade and culture in the Ottoman Empire. It had a modern harbour, large colonies of foreign business-men and numerous schools and colleges which attracted students from far beyond Lebanon. The total number of its inhabitants was approaching 100,000. The percentage of Christians among them was constantly increasing; for throughout the century Christians had been settling in the town, attracted by the superior opportunities and comforts of urban life or seeking, after the massacres of 1860, the comparative safety of a coastal city in which European influence was strong.

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But although the Syria of 1900 was more prosperous than that of 1800, it was also more consciously discontented. The rule of the Sultan Abdul-Hamid II was, indeed, less wholly destructive and regressive in Syria than in other provinces of the Empire, perhaps because some of his principal advisers were Syrians. Public works were built, notably the Pilgrims' Railway from Damascus to Medina, and the area of civil government and cultivation was extended; but his régime, in the greater part of Syria as elsewhere, was one of tyranny and of repression. For this reason, when political consciousness revived, the form which it took was largely one of opposition to the autocratic rule of the Sultan. It is true that he tried to attract the politically conscious Moslems to his side, 11: Hourani S-4 (no date) 1946 MD1 SyriaMD1

by means of the 'Pan-Islamic movement', which aimed at /75 the union of the Islamic peoples under the leadership of the Sultan-Caliph. But Pan-Islamism was a bogy with which to frighten the European Powers rather than a serious political movement.

The revival of political consciousness was late in beginning. The very ideas of political association and public opinion did not filter into the Ottoman Empire until the second half of the nineteenth century; and throughout the century police-measures and an exceedingly strict censorship made political organization practically impossible. But not all Abdul-Hamid's repressive policy could prevent the infiltration in one way or another of Western political concepts: democracy, responsible government, the party system, freedom of expression. Nor could it prevent the development of a daily and periodical press in Arabic, which was not, of course, allowed to print independent comment or very much news, but which raised the level of political knowledge and understanding and served as an intellectual unifying force.

There were two main movements of opposition in Syria. One was the movement, here as throughout the Empire, for the limitation of the Sultan's authority and the restoration of the democratic constitution of 1876, as a first step to the regeneration of the Empire: this was the programme of the so-called 'Young Turks', organized in the 'Committee of Union and Progress'. The other was the movement throughout the Arab provinces of the Empire for Arab national unity and self-government. These two movements were not at first sharply distinguished from one another, partly because both had as their immediate objective the overthrow of Abdul-Hamid's autocracy, and partly because Arab nationalism in its early stages thought rather in terms of autonomy within the Empire than of complete independence. But after the 'Young Turk' revolution of 1908, and the substitution of the rule of the Committee for that of Abdul-Hamid, it soon became clear that the Committee was no more sympathetic to Arab aspirations than the Sultan had been; the movement of unrest in the Arab provinces became more specifically Arab and also more articulate. Before 1908 the Arab nationalist movement, in so far as it had existed at all, had not been organized, except for a few rather ineffective societies, such as the 'Ligue de la Patrie Arabe' founded in Paris in 1904. But from 1908

175 onwards there began to appear those Arab political societies of which the story has been incomparably told by the late Mr. George Antonius.[1] At first they were public, and aimed not at complete independence for the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire, but at administrative reform and decentralization within the Empire. Such were the 'Arab Ottoman Brotherhood' and the 'Literary Club', both established in Constantinople, and the 'Party of Ottoman Decentralization' founded in Cairo in 1912. But after a time secret societies were formed, with complete independence for the Arab provinces as their aim. The most important of them were 'al-Fatat', which was founded by a group of students in Paris in 1911 and established its headquarters in Syria two years later; and 'al-Ahd', founded in 1914 and consisting almost entirely of Army officers, among them a large number of Iraqis. In the previous year the nationalist movement had first attracted the notice of the outside world by holding its first Congress in Paris. The majority of the delegates were Syrians and Lebanese, and half were Christians. The Congress demanded full rights for the Arabs and decentralization within the Empire; but the Turkish Government made only a few illusory concessions.

By this time, however, few of the convinced nationalists hoped to achieve much by agreement with the Turkish Government. It was clear that the Empire was breaking up. By 1914 it had lost almost all its Balkan provinces and the whole of North Africa, although the Sultan's suzerainty over Egypt was still recognized in form; its territories had shrunk in Europe to a small district round Constantinople, in Asia to Anatolia, Syria, Mesopotamia and part of western Arabia, with a claim to sovereignty over other parts of Arabia. The nationalists found themselves faced with a question of great moment: what would be the fate of the Arab provinces when the Empire collapsed? Would it be possible for them to constitute an independent State, or must they fall into the hands of new masters?

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[1] G. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, London, 1938.

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II. THE FIRST WORLD WAR AND THE PEACE SETTLEMENT

I

THE opening of the First World War in 1914 found a number of Governments and groups with an interest in changing the political status of Syria. First, there were the Arab nationalists, who wanted the Arab parts of the Ottoman Empire to become autonomous. They were divided in their political ideas and preferences. Some wished to achieve their aims through the help of Great Britain or France or the United States; others relied only upon their own strength and efforts. Some aimed at establishing an independent Arab State, others a self-governing Arab kingdom within an Ottoman federation, yet others a Syrian State loosely linked with the other Arabic-speaking regions. But all alike were hostile to the Young Turkish Government with its Pan-Turanian policy, and very many were willing, with greater or smaller hesitations and reservations, to throw in their lot with Great Britain should Turkey become involved in the war. 175 186

Arab nationalist sentiment was widespread among the army officers, officials, professional men and in general the educated classes. The nationalist societies in Syria like 'al-Fatat' were in touch with Arab nationalists in the other Arabic-speaking regions: with the Iraqi army officers of 'al-Ahd'; with the powerful Syrian colonies in Egypt and the New World; with the Sharif Husain, the ruler, under Turkish suzerainty, of the Moslem Holy Places in the Hejaz; and with Abdul-Aziz Ibn Sa'ud, the most powerful ruler of central Arabia, and virtually an independent monarch in spite of a shadowy Turkish suzerainty.

Side by side with Arab nationalism there existed a lively particularist movement among the Lebanese Christians. They wished the autonomy of Lebanon to be completed and its frontiers extended; they looked to France for help in achieving their aims and for protection when these should have been realized. Certain of them were not hostile to Arab nationalism, provided it recognized the special position of Lebanon; some indeed worked actively for Syrian or Arab independence.

Of external powers, France was the most interested in Syria. 175 She possessed important interests in the country: investments, Christian missions and schools and a traditional connexion

175 with the Catholics. She desired at all costs to preserve and if possible to extend them. In addition, she believed a foothold in the Levant would strengthen her position both as a Mediterranean and as a Moslem Power; and if the Ottoman Empire were to collapse, she was anxious to take her share of the spoils.

Great Britain wished to secure control of the port of Haifa, and could not permit the establishment of an unfriendly Power on the eastern side of the Suez Canal. But in the northern part of Syria her interests were mainly indirect, arising out of her policy in other parts of Arab Asia. The Indian Government wished to use southern Iraq as an outpost for the defence of India and the Persian oil-fields. Oil was also known to exist in northern Iraq. In June, 1914, the Turkish Petroleum Company had been formed with mainly British capital, and had obtained a concession covering the Vilayets of Mosul and Baghdad. Later this would give Great Britain an indirect interest in Syria, as the country through which the oil would flow on its way to the Mediterranean; but in 1914 the importance of the Iraqi oil was not realized. Moreover, as the most influential power in the Arabian peninsula, Great Britain could not be indifferent to the fate of so important a centre of Arab life as Syria.

One other group had interests in Syria: the Zionist movement.[1] The Zionists believed that the Jewish problem in the world could only be solved by the creation of a strong and vigorous Jewish community in Palestine, with an economic and social structure more normal than was possible to the Jews in Europe, and with an autonomous culture and spiritual life. Some, the so-called 'practical Zionists', hoped to create this community by direct means: immigration, the purchase of land, the establishment of agricultural settlements. Many of them laid special emphasis upon the revival of the Hebrew language and the recreation of the spirit of Judaism. By 1914 'practical Zionism' had had a considerable success: many thousands of Jews were living in rural colonies and in the new quarters of the towns, and Hebrew was becoming once more a language of everyday life and of education. But there was another group, the 'political Zionists', which was not indeed opposed to the first, but which argued that the Jewish community in Palestine would not help materially to solve the

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[1] For a further treatment of Zionism, see Chapter VI.

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Jewish problem unless it possessed a definite political status or guarantee. The founder of organized Zionism, Theodor Herzl, had tried to secure such a status from the Ottoman Government. He had failed, and the eyes of the Zionists turned to the European Powers. Many of them hoped to persuade the German Government to put pressure on the Turks to relax their opposition; but once the War broke out the most important section pinned their faith upon Great Britain.

2

The entry of Turkey into the war in November, 1914, gave all these parties an opportunity to realize their ambitions. In addition, it gave to Arab nationalism and Zionism a new importance for the British Government, as possible allies in the conflict with the Central Powers. The years of war saw not only practical collaboration between the parties, but also the conclusion of a series of agreements on the ultimate disposal of the territories of the Ottoman Empire. Even before the outbreak of war informal contacts had taken place between British officials in Egypt and prominent Arabs. Shortly after the war began formal relations were established between the British authorities and the Sharif Husain. In his own name and on behalf of the secret Arab nationalist organizations in Syria, he expressed his willingness to organize an Arab revolt against the Turks, provided he were given British assistance and an undertaking to recognize Arab independence should the revolt be successful.

The negotiations which ensued took the form of an exchange of letters between the Sharif Husain and Sir Henry McMahon, the British High Commissioner in Egypt. In his letter of October 24th, 1915, Sir Henry McMahon defined the limits within which His Majesty's Government was prepared to recognize Arab independence. Replying to the Sharif's request for the recognition of the independence of all the Arabic-speaking countries of Asia, he stated that:

'The two districts of Mersina and Alexandretta, and portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo, cannot be said to be purely Arab, and should be excluded from the limits demanded. . . . As for those regions lying within the proposed frontiers where Great Britain is free to act without detriment to the interests of her

● 175 ally, France, I am empowered in the name of the Government of Great Britain to give the following assurances and make the following reply to your letter :

'Subject to the above modifications, Great Britain is prepared to recognize and uphold the independence of the Arabs in all the regions within the limits demanded by the Sharif of Mecca.'

In his reply, dated November 5th, 1915, Husain denied the British assertion that the Syrian coastlands were not purely Arab. 'The two Vilayets of Aleppo and Beirut', he stated, 'and their sea-coasts are purely Arab vilayets, and there is no difference between a Moslem and a Christian Arab.' On December 14th, McMahon replied that as the interests of France were involved in both the Vilayets, the question would require careful consideration, and a further communication on the subject would be addressed to Husain in due course. To this Husain responded, on January 1st, 1916, by postponing the question until after the war, but indicating what his attitude would then be.

'We have felt bound', he stated, 'to avoid what may possibly injure the alliance of Great Britain and France and the agreement made between them during the present war and calamities; yet we find it our duty that the eminent minister should be sure that, at the first opportunity after this war is finished, we shall ask you (what we avert our eyes from today) for what we now leave to France in Beirut and its coasts. . . . It is impossible to allow any derogation that gives France, or any other Power, a span of land in those regions.'[1]

3

In October 1915 the French Government was informed of these negotiations; and shortly afterwards conversations took place between Sir Mark Sykes and M. Georges Picot, representing the British and French Governments respectively, for the delimitation of the spheres of influence of their Governments in the territories at that time under Ottoman control. On May 16th, 1916, a secret agreement, commonly known as the 'Sykes-Picot Agreement', was concluded and embodied in a number of notes exchanged between the British, French and Russian Governments.

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[1] For English translation, see *Parliamentary Papers*, 1939, H.M. Stationery Office, Cmd. 5952.

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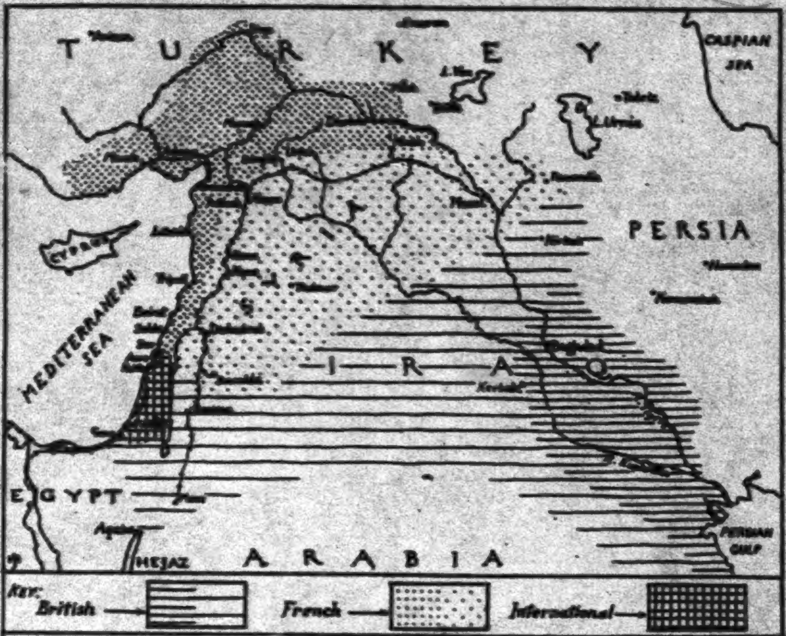
THE "SYKES-PICOT" AGREEMENT, 1916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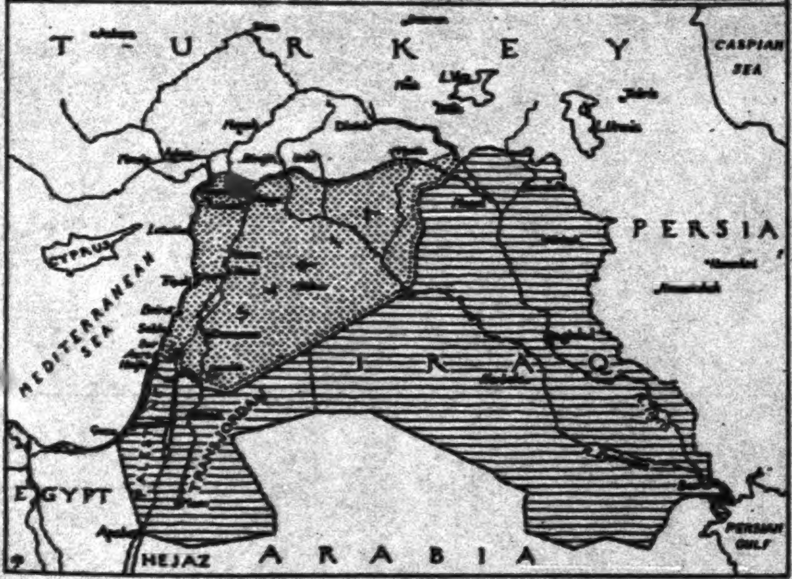
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PERSIAN GULF

THE BRITISH AND FRENCH MANDATED TERRITORIES, 1922

● 175 This agreement differed greatly in spirit from that which had been concluded with the Sharif Husain. It provided for the division of the Fertile Crescent into a number of zones. In the interior of Syria and the Vilayet of Mosul, Great Britain and France agreed to recognize an independent Arab State, or Confederation of States, under the suzerainty of an Arab chief. In part of this region, including what is now Transjordan and a strip of territory in the south of the Vilayet of Mosul, Great Britain was to have the right of priority in enterprises and local loans, and she alone was to supply foreign advisers and officials; in the remainder, France was to possess similar rights. In coastal Syria, from a point between Acre and Sur (Tyre) up to and including Cilicia, France was to be at liberty to establish such direct or indirect administration or control as she might desire or deem fit to establish after agreement with the Arab State or Confederation. In the Vilayets of Baghdad and Basra, Great Britain was to be in a similar position. In what is now Palestine an international administration was to be established, and the Sharif of Mecca among others was to be consulted on its form; but Great Britain was to be accorded Haifa and Acre.[1]

In letters exchanged at the same time British interests in the oil of Mosul were safeguarded by a French assurance that pre-war concessions in the area under French influence would be recognized; and the British Government made it clear that it accepted the agreement on the understanding that the Arabs should obtain the towns of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo.

4

Negotiations had also been proceeding between the Zionist organization and the British Government. They resulted in an agreement which was embodied in a letter from the Foreign Secretary, Mr. (later Lord) Balfour, to Lord Rothschild on November 2nd, 1917. This letter, usually known as the 'Balfour Declaration', stated that:

'His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.'

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[1] For text, see Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, pp. 428-30.

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The publication of the Balfour Declaration, and still more the revelation of the Sykes-Picot Agreement by the Bolshevik Government of Russia, caused the Sharif Husain and other Arab leaders to doubt the sincerity of the British Government's undertakings. To allay their doubts, certain additional assurances were given them during the last year of the war. In January, 1918, Commander Hogarth of the Arab Bureau in Cairo was sent to Jedda to give Husain (who had been proclaimed King of the Hejaz in November 1916) a verbal explanation of the meaning of the Balfour Declaration. Among other things he assured the King that 'Jewish settlement in Palestine would only be allowed so far as would be consistent with the political and economic freedom of the Arab population.'[1] Again, on February 8th, 1918, the British Government assured the King that they and their allies 'are determined to stand by the Arab peoples in their struggle for the establishment of an Arab world in which law shall replace Ottoman injustice, and in which unity shall prevail over the rivalries artificially provoked by the policy of Turkish officials. His Majesty's Government reaffirm their former pledge in regard to the liberation of the Arab peoples.'

On June 16th, 1918, an officer of the Arab Bureau made to seven Arab leaders in Cairo a declaration which reaffirmed once more the intention of the British Government to work for and to recognize the freedom and independence of the Arabs.

The effect of these assurances was increased by the public statements of peace aims made by Allied statesmen as the war drew to its end. Thus on January 5th, 1918, Mr. Lloyd George stated that 'while we do not challenge the maintenance of the Turkish Empire in the homelands of the Turkish race . . . Arabia, Armenia, Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine are, in our judgment, entitled to a recognition of their separate national conditions. What the exact form of that recognition in each particular case should be, need not here be discussed. . . .'

Three days later, President Wilson included among his 'Fourteen Points' the provision that 'the Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure

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[1] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1939, Cmd. 5964.

175 sovereignty, but the other nationalities now under Turkish rule should be assured an . . . unmolested opportunity of autonomous development.'

Finally, on November 17th, 1918, a joint Anglo-French Declaration was issued from the General Headquarters of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, and circulated in Palestine, in the rest of Syria and in Mesopotamia. It defined the goal of the Allies in the Eastern campaign as the complete and final liberation of the peoples oppressed by the Turks, and the establishment of national Governments and administrations deriving authority from the free initiative and choice of the populations. Great Britain and France agreed to assist in the setting-up and recognition of indigenous Governments and administrations in Syria and Mesopotamia. They did not wish to impose a system upon the populations of those regions, but to give such help as would ensure the smooth working of the governments elected by the populations of their own free will.[1]

6

It was the British undertakings which induced the Sharif Husain and his sons to throw in their lot with the Allies, and lead the Arab Revolt against the Turks. The story of the Revolt need not be told in detail here; but it must be made clear that, although its events took place largely beyond the borders of Syria, Syrians played a great part in it. Syrian officers and soldiers participated in the campaigns of the Arab army; their number was constantly on the increase as the war went on, largely through desertions from the Turkish ranks. Moreover, British and Arab nationalist agents established contact with the chiefs of the great Beduin tribes of the Syrian Desert, and assured their favourable attitude to the Allied advance northwards. The friendliness of the Syrian population in general, no less than the support of the Arab forces beyond the Jordan, was of great assistance to the Allies in their final campaign.

On the whole, however, Syria's role in the war was one of passive suffering rather than active participation. In the later stages of the war the country was a battleground. In 1917 only the southern portion was directly affected by General Allenby's advance which reached Jerusalem in December. In September, 1918, Allenby moved northwards once more, in October

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[1] For text of these messages and declarations, see Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, pp. 431-6.

Damascus was captured, and at the time of the Armistice Allied troops were in occupation of the whole of Syria as far north as Aleppo. But to be a battleground was not the worst which Syria endured. Throughout the war, the population suffered from serious shortage of food, due to bad transport arrangements, profiteering, a corrupt and inefficient administration and a plague of locusts. In the later stages of the war famine set in, with its attendant diseases. It was especially serious in Lebanon, where the Turkish authorities followed a policy of discrimination in the distribution of food as a reprisal for the sympathies of the population with the Allies. Mr. Antonius has estimated that in the whole of Syria 300,000 people died of starvation or malnutrition during the years of war.[1]

To the terrors of famine were added the repressive measures adopted by Jemal Pasha, Governor of Syria and Commander-in-Chief of the Turkish forces there, against those suspected of Arab nationalist activities. These measures were first adopted after the discovery in the French Consulate at Beirut of documents incriminating a number of prominent Syrians in subversive activities aiming at the establishment of an independent Arab state. In 1915 and 1916 a number of those implicated were publicly hanged in Damascus and Beirut. Others were imprisoned and deported to remote parts of the Ottoman Empire. Almost everybody of any eminence lived under suspicion and surveillance, and the whole country went in fear of 'the Butcher' Jemal and his military tribunals. The rigour of Turkish rule naturally increased after the outbreak of the Arab Revolt and the development of a direct threat to the Turkish position in Syria from the British forces in Egypt.

7

When the war ended, the whole of Arab Asia was free from Ottoman rule. Mesopotamia was occupied by British and Imperial troops. The Turkish troops had been cleared out of the Hejaz, and King Husain had been recognized as an Ally. A number of other rulers in the Arabian Peninsula, of whom the most notable was Abdul-Aziz Ibn Sa'ud of Nejd, had made treaties with the Government of India and had repudiated Ottoman suzerainty. As for geographical Syria, the whole of it was occupied by Allied troops: British troops throughout

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[1] Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 241.

15 the area, a small French force on the coast and the Arab army of King Husain in the interior. General Allenby was ultimately responsible for the military government of the area ; but it was only in Palestine to the west of the Jordan that a British provisional administration was set up. In the coastal regions north of Palestine, and subsequently in Cilicia, the provisional Government was French ; in the four cities of Aleppo, Homs, Hama and Damascus, and in Transjordan it was Arab, under the Amir Faisal, the third son of King Husain. To the Arab administration a small number of British and French officers was attached ; its officials were mainly Syrians who had held posts in the Ottoman army or civil service, but there was also an influential group of Iraqi officers. The attempt of the Arab nationalists in October, 1918, to extend their rule to Beirut and the coast was thwarted by the intervention of General Allenby.

The grounds already existed for a conflict between the Arabs and the French Government. The latter regarded the whole northern half of Syria as lying within its sphere of influence, in accordance with the Sykes-Picot Agreement. It did not consider itself to be bound by the promises which its Ally had given to the Sharif Husain ; it was from the beginning sceptical and suspicious of the idea of establishing an independent Arab State ; and it was influenced by the attitude of the Lebanese Christians, many of whom had no desire to become subjects of an Arab kingdom governed by a member of the ruling family of the Hejaz. It was also lukewarm in its attitude to Zionism. The Arab nationalists for their part regarded themselves as entitled to complete independence, in virtue both of their participation in the war and of the undertakings given them by the Allied Governments. Their leaders knew of the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the Balfour Declaration, and repudiated both of them, although they do not appear at the beginning to have understood the implications of the latter. Though the Maronites as a whole wanted French control or a French mandate, the Arabs of Syria were for the most part hostile to France ; if foreign advice and control were necessary, they would have preferred British to French, and American to either. United in their demand for independence, they were divided on the form which it should take. A section among them would have preferred a separate Syrian State to one linked with the Arabs of the Arabian Peninsula.

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With its commitments to both parties, the British Government had a special interest in bringing about a settlement of the problem of Franco-Arab relations in Syria. At its invitation, the Amir Faisal visited Europe in November, 1918. In the course of his discussions with British statesmen and officials it was made plain to him that Great Britain was not prepared to quarrel with France over Syria, however sympathetic she might be to Arab aspirations.

8

The Peace Conference took up the question of the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of 1919. On January 30th, it decided that the Arab provinces should be wholly separated from the Empire and the newly-conceived mandate-system applied to them. On February 6th, the Amir Faisal appeared before the Conference. After recalling the efforts of the Arabs during the War, and the Allied promises, he demanded the independence of the whole of Arab Asia, and suggested the establishment of a Confederation. He recognized that the Arabs needed help from outside, but not at the price of independence; they should indicate to the League of Nations the help which they required, and the Mandatory whom they wanted; if their wishes were not clear, an international inquiry should be held. He was prepared to accept the independence of Lebanon, provided that it entered into an economic union with the rest of Arab Asia and that the possibility of its joining the Confederation was kept open. As for Palestine, on account of its universal character he left it on one side for the consideration of all the parties interested. He does not seem at this time to have been unconditionally opposed to Zionism as he then understood it, and in January, 1919, had, indeed, made an informal agreement with Dr. Weizmann, the Zionist leader.

Evidence was also given by a pro-French Syrian delegation, composed mainly of Lebanese Christians and without any representative character, which asked for a Syria independent of Arabia and under French control; by a Lebanese delegation which claimed the autonomy of Lebanon, the extension of its frontiers and the protection of France; and by a Zionist delegation which advocated the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine under a British mandate.

The decision on these various claims was delayed by a violent dispute between Great Britain and France upon the

/75 future of geographical Syria. At a meeting on March 20th, 1919, the French representative, M. Pichon, claimed that Syria should be treated as a unit and not be divided, and that France should become the Mandatory for it. For Palestine he suggested an international administration: although a private agreement had been reached by Mr. Lloyd George and M. Clemenceau in December, 1918, by which Mosul and Palestine were to be included in the British sphere of influence, despite the provisions of the Sykes-Picot Agreement. Reminded by Mr. Lloyd George of the agreement with King Husain, M. Pichon claimed that France was not bound by it. President Wilson suggested that an international commission of inquiry should be appointed to ascertain the wishes of the inhabitants. This suggestion was at first accepted by Great Britain and France, but afterwards rejected. A purely American Commission, consisting of Dr. H. C. King and Mr. C. R. Crane, was then appointed. It toured Syria, including Palestine, in the summer of 1919, and presented a report to President Wilson, recommending the establishment of a Mandate for Iraq and another for geographical Syria, which should be treated as a single unit. In each of the two countries a constitutional monarchy should be set up, and the Amir Faisal should be King of Syria. In accordance with the wishes of the people, the United States should be asked to accept the Mandate for Syria, while Great Britain should be offered that for Iraq. The Commission was opposed to a French Mandate, and expressed grave doubts about the Zionist experiment in Palestine. The report was ignored at the time and was only published three years later.[1]

9

The Versailles Conference broke up without having come to an agreement about the future of the Arab lands. But even before it ended, Faisal had returned to Syria, with his hopes disappointed. He found the situation there growing daily worse. The Arabs were embittered by the failure of the Conference to recognize their claims, and found much to complain of in the French administration in Lebanon, the attempt to introduce methods of Indian government in Iraq, and the activities of the Zionist Commission in Palestine. The French regarded the installation of Faisal in Damascus as contrary to their interests, and were suspicious of the activities of the British officers attached to his Government. In addition, there were local conflicts between Arab bands and French troops in regions on the borders of the French zone of occupation.

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[1] For text, see Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, pp. 443-58.

Most responsible Arab and French officials doubted the possibility of a peaceful agreement ; but Faisal still clung to the belief that Great Britain would use her influence with France in favour of the Arabs. This belief, however, was shaken by the Anglo-French Agreement of September, 1919, which provided for the withdrawal of British troops from Syria (excluding Palestine) and from Cilicia, and their replacement by Arab troops in the interior of Syria and by French troops on the coast and in Cilicia. When Faisal protested against the agreement, the British Government invited him to come once more to Europe and try to reach an understanding with France. Clemenceau at first refused to see him ; when they met, however, they came to a provisional agreement, by which the right of the Syrian Arabs to independence and unity was acknowledged, but their State was to be defended, advised and represented abroad by France.

This agreement was never put into practice. The Government of Clemenceau fell, and was succeeded by one more extreme in its Eastern policy. Moreover, the growth of the Kemalist movement in Turkey, which threatened France's position in Cilicia, made it more urgent for her representatives in the East to prevent the outbreak of disorder in Syria and to obtain control of the system of communications in the interior. They were further alarmed by the evidence of military preparations by the Arab Government. The Arabs for their part were apprehensive of similar preparations by the French ; their patriotic fervour was stimulated by the example of the growing nationalist movements in Iraq and Turkey ; and to their resentment against France had now been added an active hostility to Zionism. They were not disposed to be patient and sit by while their independence was taken from them.

On March 20th, 1920, a Congress of Syrian notables met at Damascus and offered the crown of Syria and Palestine to Faisal, who accepted it. This action was immediately repudiated by the British and French Governments, then engaged in preparing for the Conference at San Remo, at which the fate of the former Ottoman territories was to be decided. When the Conference met it allotted a Mandate of type 'A' for the northern

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half of geographical Syria to France, and one for the southern half to Great Britain, with the obligation of carrying out the policy of the Balfour Declaration (April 24th, 1920). In reply, Faisal, who had refused to have anything to do with the Conference, declared that he would not recognize the imposition of foreign rule upon any portion of Syrian territory, including Palestine.

Both sides now prepared for war. The Arab Government attempted to increase its military strength, and the French army in Lebanon was reinforced with Senegalese and other colonial troops. On July 14th, 1920, General Gouraud, who had been appointed French Commander-in-Chief and High Commissioner for Syria and Lebanon in October of the previous year, sent an ultimatum to Faisal. He demanded the unconditional recognition of the French Mandate, the reduction of the Syrian army, the abolition of conscription, the provision of facilities for the circulation of the new Franco-Syrian currency, French military occupation of the Rayaq-Aleppo railway and of Aleppo itself, and the punishment of those guilty of attacks upon French detachments. Against the wishes of the greater number of his supporters, Faisal accepted the ultimatum ; but his answer was unaccountably delayed, and did not reach Gouraud until the time-limit attached to the ultimatum had expired and the French forces had been ordered to advance on Damascus. When Gouraud received the answer he halted his troops, but sent a further ultimatum containing more stringent demands. This Faisal was unable to accept. Once more the French columns moved upon Damascus. After a fight with Arab forces at Maisalun they entered the city on July 25th. Subsequently the rest of the area assigned to France was occupied. Faisal left the scene of his brief, uncertain reign for exile and then for a new and more lasting throne in Baghdad.

He has never been forgotten in Damascus. Too short for positive achievement, his rule had aroused enthusiasm and loyalty throughout the country. His Government had had more solid foundations in the popular consent than any perhaps since Ummayad times ; had it received help it might have endured. The generation which remembered Faisal could never forgive the French, nor give to their rule more than a forced acquiescence.

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Faisal's departure cleared the way for a final settlement by /26 the Allied Powers of the status of Syria. The texts of the Mandates for 'Syria and Lebanon' (that is, the northern part of geographical Syria) and for 'Palestine' (that is, the southern half) were formally approved, along with that for Iraq, by the Council of the League of Nations in July, 1922, and became effective in September, 1923. In 1924 the United States gave her consent to the Mandates by agreements with France and Great Britain.

The Mandate for Syria and Lebanon provided for the gradual establishment of self-government in those countries, and the progressive relaxation of the Mandatory's control.[1] That for Palestine, however, gave the Mandatory full powers of legislation and administration, and laid upon it the positive duty of helping in the construction of a Jewish national home, provided the rights of the rest of the population were not prejudiced. But the text of the Mandate made it clear that the national home was to be confined to those parts of the British area which lay west of the Jordan, that is to Palestine proper, and not to be allowed to spread east of the Jordan. The region east of the Jordan had been administered by Faisal's Government from 1918-1920. The French did not occupy it after the expulsion of Faisal, and by an Anglo-French agreement in December, 1920, it was placed within the British mandatory area. Shortly afterwards Faisal's brother Abdullah moved northwards from Hejaz with a view to attacking the French in Syria; to prevent the attack he was offered and accepted the government, subject to Mandatory control, of the region east of the Jordan, or 'Transjordan'. The arrangement was at first provisional, but in April, 1923, it was announced that His Majesty's Government would recognize the existence of an independent Government in Transjordan under the Amir Abdullah, provided it was constitutional and enabled His Majesty's Government to fulfil its international obligations in respect of the territory.

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At the San Remo Conference, which allotted the Mandate to France, certain other important decisions were also reached.

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[1] The Mandate is summarized in Chapter IX, and its text is given in the Appendix.

E

175 By an Anglo-French agreement, France renounced the traditional protectorate over the Catholics so far as Palestine and the Holy Places were concerned, in view of British opposition to its continuance and the opinion of the Holy See that the time for it had passed.

By another agreement, the interests of the two Powers in the oilfields of Iraq were defined. The British Government undertook to grant to the French 25 per cent of the crude oil, if the fields were developed by Government action, or else, if a private company were used to develop the fields, 25 per cent of the shares in it; arrangements were also made in regard to the transport of oil from Iraq and Persia through the French sphere of influence to the eastern Mediterranean. It was in consideration of this agreement that France officially recognized the inclusion in Mesopotamia of the district of Mosul, which under the terms of the Sykes-Picot Agreement was to have formed part of the French sphere of influence.

The frontiers of the French Mandated Territories were established by a series of agreements in the early years of the mandatory period. The frontiers with Iraq, Palestine and Transjordan were settled by two Anglo-French agreements made in 1920 and 1922. The delimitation was in some ways arbitrary. There was no good reason, economic or ethnic, for the inclusion of the Hulah district in Palestine; for the separation of the Hauran and Jebel Druze from northern Palestine and Transjordan; or for the separation of the Jazirah into Iraqi and Syrian sections.

The frontier with Turkey caused greater difficulty. Under the terms of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the sphere of French control was to have included Cilicia and a region to the east of it with a predominantly Turkish-speaking population. These areas were occupied by French troops after the Armistice; and it was intended to settle in them a large number of Armenian refugees. But the revival of Turkish power under Mustafa Kemal made the French position difficult. Fighting broke out between the occupying army and the Turkish nationalist forces. With a view to avoiding the dangers and expenses of a large-scale campaign and to safeguarding the northern frontier of Syria, and also because the unsettled state of Anglo-French relations in the Near East made France not unwilling to win the friendship of the Turks, the French Government decided to come to an agreement with the

Turkish Nationalists. By the Franklin-Bouillon Agreement of October 20th, 1921, France agreed to evacuate Cilicia and certain other districts; the region of Alexandretta, with its largely Turkish population, remained under French control, but France undertook to give it a special administrative régime.[1] In spite of this agreement and of the extinction of Turkish rights in Syria by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, tension and unrest continued in the frontier regions between Turkey and Syria, where the population was mixed Arab, Turkish and Kurd. When in 1925 a Mixed Commission met to delimit the frontier, its work was obstructed by Turkish claims to a number of districts which had until then been considered parts of Syria. In February, 1926, a Franco-Turkish agreement was signed which settled the most important points at issue; but it was not until June, 1929, that the controversy was closed for the time. In 1930 the eastern section of the Turco-Syrian frontier was delimited, and there was added to Syria a further district of the Jazirah stretching as far as the Tigris.

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The Peace Settlement failed to fulfil the hopes with which the Arab nationalists had entered the war. It is true that the whole of Arab Asia had thrown off Ottoman suzerainty, that Hejaz had been recognized as an independent State, and that the Kingdom of Ibn Sa'ud in central Arabia continued to prosper, strong in the alliance and help of the Government of India. But the more advanced Arab communities of the Fertile Crescent had been placed under a Mandatory administration which they found it hard to distinguish from colonial rule. Moreover, they had been divided from one another. Geographical Syria had been separated from Iraq, and had also been partitioned into French and British mandated territories. In a portion of the latter area, there had been initiated an experiment in large-scale Jewish immigration which threatened to make impossible the achievement in that area of nationalist aspirations.

The ghost of the Peace Settlement has haunted Arab politics ever since. It turned into bitterness the enthusiasm which the Arab Revolt had aroused, and seriously damaged the moral influence of Great Britain and France in the Near

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[1] For translation of the Agreement see *Parliamentary Papers, 1921*, Cmd. 1556.

175 East. The bitterness was all the more dangerous because during the war the Arabs had realized for the first time in centuries the strength which might be theirs, and had become conscious that their destiny was in their own hands. The sense of grievance and the sense of power have coloured the nationalist movement in this generation.

Not only the Arabs were disappointed by the settlement. The French were irritated that they had been permitted to establish only a temporary Mandate over Syria and Lebanon, and that only after a bitter and protracted dispute. Their irritation was directed not so much against the nationalists as against the British Government for having, as they alleged, placed and maintained Faisal in Damascus. The Zionists were grateful for the world's recognition of their right to colonize Palestine, but many of them resented the closure of Transjordan, which they considered as part of Palestine, to Jewish immigration. Great Britain had obtained most of what she wanted for herself; but some at least of her statesmen and officials disapproved of French policy in Syria, were uneasy about its effects upon the Arabs elsewhere, and regretted that it had prevented the complete fulfilment of the undertakings given during the war.

It was in this atmosphere of bitterness, suspicion and resentment that French rule in Syria and Lebanon began.

369 from outside than were the villages. The foreign merchants
621 and artisans in the coastal towns and Aleppo, the pilgrims
144 who every year met in Damascus for their long journey down the pilgrims' road to the Holy Cities in Arabia, left their mark. Thus beside the society of the desert and the countryside there flourished an urban society of merchants and craftsmen. Not only was the life of the great towns very different from that of the countryside; they differed one from another. Each had a life of its own and was the focus of an intense local loyalty.

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101 The Arabo-Islamic community of Syria was a part, although in some ways a distinctive part, of two larger units: the Arabic-speaking world which extended from the Atlantic Ocean to the frontiers of Persia, and included Morocco, Algeria, Tunis, Tripoli, Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Arabian Peninsula; and the Islamic world, stretching as far as the marches of China and embracing, in addition to the Arabic countries, Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, Turkestan and large parts of Africa, India, China and the East Indies. In spite of local differences, of internal conflicts and of the difficulties of communication, each of these worlds was unified on a profound level.

175 Over a large part of the Arab and Islamic worlds, the
101 spiritual and social unity which they possessed was reinforced by the political unity derived from common membership of
177 the Ottoman Empire. The positive virtue of Ottoman rule was that it provided this political unity; its negative that it did not interfere with the life and customary law of the subject-peoples. Nomads by origin, the Ottoman Turks cared little for the arts of peace, for commerce and industry, or for culture. They left them to others, and thus contributed nothing essential to the civilization of the Arab provinces which they ruled for four hundred years. In conquering the Arab world they had themselves been conquered by it. They had become Moslems, and in their intellectual and social life had adapted themselves to Arab ways.

175 The Turks performed also another function. Their military
177 strength preserved the Arab civilization from interference or even from living contact with other civilizations. In the early Islamic centuries such contacts had existed, and the Arabo-

11: Hourani S-4 (no date) 1946 MD1 Syria MD1

Islamic world had been much affected by influences from 175
the Mediterranean countries, from Persia and from India. 177
It had had the power to assimilate the products of other
civilizations, and also to extend its dominion over peoples
alien to the Arabs in origin and way of life. But later it
ceased to develop and either to give out or to receive influences;
and although the stream of influences from the West never
completely vanished, during the great days of the Ottoman
Empire it was smaller and less effective than it had previously
been and was again to become.

II

In the past century or more this Arab world has been shaken 177
to its foundations by the impact of the West. Western ideas, 178
learned from schools, from books and latterly from the cinema,
have changed at least the externals of social life. The competition of Western goods has broken the old crafts and opened up new economic possibilities. New means of communication are breaking up the closed local community; the life of the Beduin is threatened by the motor-car, the aeroplane and the extension of civil authority. The administrative machinery which the modern Government commands, and the extension of the limits of its action, are making the old feudal and sectarian organization unnecessary and even impossible. New Western rulers have imposed themselves, who have not even so much claim to be obeyed or such deep roots in popular memory and habit as had the Ottoman Sultan. The new social, economic and political life has in its turn shaken the domination of Moslem jurisprudence; and men have begun to raise new questions of the adequacy of religious faith and loyalty as a basis for society, and the place of Islam in the modern world. A new world has revealed itself, which strikes at the very foundations of the old, and is indeed its exact antithesis.

The transformation of the old life has brought with it a 178
number of difficulties and dangers. The Arabs, like other 182
peoples in their position, are torn between two ways of life.
Sentiment, tradition and the belief that there is something of value in their tradition make them unwilling to break entirely with the old civilization, even if that were possible. But at the same time the necessities of modern life, and often a conviction that the Western civilization is in some ways

VIII. FOREIGN INTERESTS

I

648 OTHER difficulties which the nationalist movement has to face arise from the existence of important foreign interests in Syria and Lebanon. This chapter summarizes those interests as they stood at the outbreak of the war of 1939; it is clearly impossible to state with any precision the state of affairs which will come into existence after the war.

648 175 Before 1939, the interests of France far exceeded those of other States. That the Mandate for Syria and Lebanon should have been conferred upon her rather than any of the other Great Powers was due immediately to the war-time agreement between the Allies for the partition of the Ottoman Empire, but more fundamentally to the long-standing French connexions with the Ottoman Empire in general and Syria and Lebanon in particular, and to the sentiment which that connexion had aroused in certain quarters in France. French writers sometimes trace it back to Charlemagne, who conducted obscure negotiations with the Abbasid Caliph, Harun ar-Rashid, and is said to have obtained, after an exchange of letters and presents, the custody of the Christian Holy Places. They are on firmer ground when they emphasize the part played by Frenchmen in the Crusades. It is true that the Crusades were by no means an exclusively French enterprise. But French Kings, priests, nobles and knights were prominent in the organization of the Crusading States in geographical Syria. The ruling-class of the States was largely French in origin and language. They left their mark upon Syria in the castles and churches which they built and of which the ruins still survive; and equally the Crusaders and the land which they had conquered and for a time ruled made a deep impression upon the imagination of France. It is unwise to ignore the historic imagination of peoples, even when its content is partly legend and only partly history.

175 The Crusades were an isolated episode. During the two centuries which succeeded the fall of Acre in 1291, no particularly close connexion existed between France and geographical Syria: commerce between the Levant and Western Europe was largely in the hands of the Italian merchants, while cultural and political relations scarcely existed. The modern French connexion with the countries of the Eastern

Mediterranean cannot be traced back beyond the first half of the sixteenth century, when the French King Francis I began to cultivate friendly relations with the Ottoman Sultan, in order to secure an ally against his enemy the Emperor Charles V. In 1535 the first Franco-Ottoman agreement was reached; the Sultan issued the first 'capitulation', permitting French citizens resident in his dominions to practise their religion, and granting them certain other privileges. This agreement served as the basis for that protection of Catholic interests in the Levant which the French Government now began to take upon itself. France's friendship with the Ottoman Government enabled her to intervene with it in favour of European Catholic priests and pilgrims, whether or not they were French.

In the course of the seventeenth century the capitulations were more than once renewed, and the French protectorate of the Catholics increased in scope and importance. Under the terms of the renewal of 1673, all ecclesiastics of the Latin rite in Ottoman territory were to be regarded as French subjects. The number of such ecclesiastics was constantly increasing, by reason of the foundation of Jesuit, Franciscan and Carmelite missions, which began the work, which they have carried on until to-day, of educating the Catholics of the Levant and of winning back to Catholicism the adherents of the dissident Eastern Churches. Moreover, the French protectorate began in this century to be extended from the Catholic subjects of Western European States resident in the Ottoman Empire to the Catholic and other Christian subjects of the Empire; this was a development which had no formal basis in the capitulations or any other official act. Thus in 1639 the French Ambassador at Constantinople was instructed by his Government 'to protect and assist the Christians and Catholics of the Levant as far as possible, interposing the name and authority of His Majesty wherever he judges that he can usefully do so'. Ten years later, in 1649, a particularly close connexion was established with one of the Catholic communities: a Maronite bishop went to the French court in order to ask for the protection of the King of France, who issued letters-patent taking the whole Maronite community into his special protection. In the second half of the century a Maronite, a member of the important Khazin family, was appointed French Vice-Consul in Damascus;

175 and the Catholic missions established schools for the Maronites, one of the most famous of them the Jesuit College of Antourah, which was later transferred to the Lazarists and is still among the great centres of French education in the Levant. Gradually the custom arose of according to the representatives of France liturgical honours in the services of the Uniate Churches.

The tendencies which had first appeared in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries continued throughout the greater part of the eighteenth. The Franco-Ottoman friendship was maintained ; the French Government continued to interest itself in the fate of the Christians of the Levant ; French commerce with the Near East grew in volume, and with it there grew up French mercantile communities in the great trading centres of the Ottoman Empire. But towards the end of the century the position of France suffered a decline, with the temporary decrease of French influence in the world, and with the growth of Russian influence in the Ottoman Empire. In 1774 the Treaty of Kutchuk Kainardji gave the Russian Government a vague right of protection over the Greek Orthodox subjects of the Sultan..

The French Revolution and the Egyptian campaign of Bonaparte caused a temporary and partial breach in the continuity of French policy. The early Revolutionary Governments withdrew their support from the Catholic missions ; and in order to facilitate his rule over Egypt, Bonaparte claimed to be the protector of Islam. It is true that in his invasion of Syria (1799) he received certain help from the Maronites and attempted to secure the assistance of the ruler of Lebanon, the Amir Bashir. But by invading Egypt and Syria he broke the other strand of French policy, friendship with the Ottoman Sultan. The latter declared war upon France ; but in 1802 a Franco-Turkish Treaty was signed, restoring to French residents in Ottoman territory their capitulatory privileges. Shortly afterwards the reversion to tradition was carried a step further ; the help and encouragement of the French Government was once more accorded to the Catholic Missions.

The resumption of continuity was not complete, however. The creation by Muhammad Ali of a virtually independent Egyptian State which threatened to overwhelm the Ottoman Empire confronted the Powers with a new problem. All of them decided that it was in their interests to maintain the Empire, with the exception of France, which, forsaking 175 her traditional ally, gave almost uninterrupted support to Muhammad Ali. This was one of the reasons why, after the withdrawal of Ibrahim Pasha from geographical Syria and its restoration to the Sultan, the Ottoman Government did all it could to weaken the position of the Maronites, the traditional protégés of France. The Druzes were encouraged to attack them; there followed the series of disturbances which culminated in the massacres of 1860. They gave the opportunity for the most spectacular exercise of the French right of protection. With the consent of the other Powers, reluctantly and conditionally given, a French expeditionary force occupied Lebanon and remained there several months, until, in 1861, the international Conference sitting in Beirut finished drawing up the statute of Lebanese autonomy. In the same period, the conflict over the Holy Places between Catholics and Orthodox, supported by France and Russia respectively, was one of the contributory causes of the Crimean War.

In less spectacular ways, too, France's concern for the Christians of the Levant showed itself throughout the nineteenth century. The work of the missions, religious, educational and humanitarian, grew continuously, thanks partly to the annual subsidy given them by the French Government. French diplomatic intervention helped to secure the recognition by the Ottoman Government of one after another of the Uniate Churches, and in many ways to promote the interests of Catholic foundations. The French protectorate over the Catholics in the Holy Places was given formal international recognition in the Treaty of Berlin in 1878; and in the same year the Prefect of Propaganda at the Vatican addressed a circular to the Catholic authorities in the Levant, instructing them that their dealings with the local authorities should be conducted through the diplomatic representatives of France. Similar statements were made again in 1888 and 1898.

The growth of anti-clericalism in France, and the separation of Church from State in 1906, made no difference to the policy of the French Government. It is true that it led to the establishment by the 'Mission Laïque' of non-religious schools for the propagation of French culture in a secular form, and that there was a decline in the number of French missionaries and teachers, and a corresponding increase in

11: Hourani S-4 (no date) 1946 MD1 Syria/MDI

/175 that of the Italians. But officially French Governments of whatever complexion recognized that anti-clericalism was not for export, and worked to preserve and strengthen their connexion with the Eastern Christians and their protectorate over Catholic interests in the Ottoman Empire. It was the existence of the French tradition which led to part of the northern Syrian coastlands being excluded from the scope of the promise of Arab independence made by the British Government to the Sharif Husain, which caused Syria and Lebanon to be assigned to France in the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916, helped to form the decision of the peace-makers to confer on France the mandate for Syria and Lebanon, and has largely determined the nature of France's policy in her Mandated Territories until to-day.

2

The existence of this tradition must be taken as a factor which, even if it rests to some extent upon legend, cannot be ignored. But it must be made clear in what the tradition consisted. One aspect of it was the protectorate over the Catholics in the Ottoman Empire. It is sometimes forgotten that it had also another aspect, friendship with the ruling power of the Empire. These two aspects, moreover, were not unconnected with one another. It was only because France was the traditional friend of the Sultan that she was able to intervene successfully with him in favour of his Catholic subjects; and it was not an accident that when France temporarily severed her friendship with the Sultan, and gave her assistance to Muhammad Ali, the attitude of the Sultan's Government towards the Eastern Christians became more unfavourable than it had been.

There is no room in this essay to discuss what historical rights are, and whether they exist. What must be emphasized is that the historic connexion summarized above, together with the legends and associations which cling to it, have helped to determine the emotional attitude of the French public to Syria and Lebanon, and thus to mould French policy. It is not only Catholics who attach value to the French tradition in the Levant; it is in some degree all those to whom history and tradition have meaning.

16: Collart et al G-5 (1953) 1954 MD1 Syria MD1

GENERAL

SYRIA AND HER HISTORICAL MONUMENTS

481 By geographical position Syria is a corridor and a meeting-place. From east to west and north to south, it is traversed
● 175 by two natural highways, one winding through the valleys of the Euphrates and Orontes to link the East with the Mediterranean world, and the other carrying the northern peoples southwards to Africa. Through the ages the country has been occupied for short or long periods by Mesopotamians, Egyptians, Hittites, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Crusaders and Ottomans. In Syria—at Kadesh and the Yarmuk—some of the great clashes in history have taken place. Today, with her fate in her own hands, Syria's past provides the varied and fertile sources of her culture, and her present, the vigour necessary for the remarkable progress she is now making.

172 Syria's wealth of historical remains is the visible embodiment of her age-long history and, from that point of view, is to be considered as a national heritage. It has a lesson to give the present generation, for such tangible evidence of their country's greatness in the past is a challenge to the young to prove themselves worthy heirs. For that reason alone, these buildings and monuments deserve to be preserved and maintained. Very often, however, they also have an aesthetic or cultural value, being of importance as works of art or bearing witness to the greatest periods of a civilization. As such, they are of importance beyond the national boundaries and their preservation is a matter of concern not only to the country which possesses them, but to all civilized nations.

For Syria, owing to the vast number and diversity of her historical monuments and the particular conditions in which they are situated, their preservation raises complicated problems. The treatment they require varies according to their present state, for only some of them have remained intact and still serve their original purpose, so that their maintenance is a regular, routine matter. Many of them, on the other hand, are used for a different purpose, never contemplated by their builders, for which they have been more or less satisfactorily adapted

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16: Collart et al G-8 ([illegible]) 1954 MD1 Syria MD1

DAMASCUS

GROWTH OF THE CITY

361
175

Lying on the edge of the desert and encircled by the green Ghutah oasis, watered by the Barada, Damascus owes its existence and development mainly to its geographical position, water supplies and gardens. The different periods of its growth which are bound up with its political history, industries and trade, are reflected in the layout of the various sections of the town, and in the architecture of its houses, monuments and streets.

The nucleus of the present city was formed at the time of Syria's annexation to Alexander's Empire. The Greek city, rising to the east of the Aramaean town, was built to a regular plan of rectangular blocks about 150 by 330 feet, showing considerable regard for town planning requirements; the layout may, in fact, even today, still be regarded as an ideal one.

Damascus's association with the Roman Empire gave a decisive impetus to the formation and development of the town. Most of the great rebuilding operations were carried out in the reigns of Septimius Severus and Caracalla. The relative importance of the various streets depended at that time upon their position in relation to the city gates. Bab Charqi is a part of the ancient East Gate, which stood at the end of the "Street called Straight" (*Via Recta*), on the site of which one of the bays of a monumental arch has recently been reconstructed. All round the Great Mosque there are many remains of the temple of Jupiter Damascenus (identified by the Romans with the god Hadad). To the west, in particular, there is the high Corinthian colonnade of one of the propylaea of the peribolos, with beautiful fragments of the arcature and entablature.

Damascus remained a satellite of Rome and then of Byzantium until the arrival of the Arabs, who, under the Omayyad dynasty, made it the capital of a great empire, the political, cultural and religious centre of Islam. The heart of the city was the Great Mosque, built by the Caliph al-Walid on the site of the ancient temple and the church of Saint John the Baptist. The Syrian architects adapted their plan to the whole area, incorporating some parts of the earlier buildings in the new edifice. The immense courtyard and the sanctuary were

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16: Collart et al G-5 (1953) 1954 MD1 Syria MD1

DAMASCUS

adorned with all the splendour of Constantinople's mosaics and the products of her art industries. The mosque was considered as one of the world's architectural masterpieces, rivalling the mosque of Omar in Jerusalem. 361 175

With the rise of the Abbasid dynasty, Damascus lost its position as the capital; the work of the Omeyyads was destroyed and their institutions proscribed. In order to subjugate the population more effectively and prevent any show of hostility, the fortified walls of the city were pulled down. This was a period of anarchy and unrest, which resulted in the formation of cliques and the development of guild life. The city ceased to be a single whole, governed by public authorities responsible for the management of the community's assets; it was split up into autonomous districts, like diminutive, and often rival, cities, each with its own independent organization, mosque, hammam (baths), suqs, surrounding walls and gates, and its own chief (sheikh) commanding a sort of police battalion.

This situation led to the development of a new system of property and a new type of city life; new bodies were formed to defend the rights of various religious communities or corporations.

AYYUBID PERIOD

The Seljuk Atabegs and the Ayyubids, in their zealous desire to see Sunnite Islam victorious and their hatred of the Fatimites and Crusaders, made Damascus once more an intellectual and religious centre, as well as a stronghold. Whereas the town's division into various districts had previously been based on craftsmen's corporations, religious creed was henceforth the determining factor; the Christians drew together and shut themselves away to the north-east of the old town; the Israelites to the south-east; the Moslem section of the population settled in the western part of the town, where many medrasahs and public buildings were then built. There, also, stood the Citadel, for whose building part of the materials and foundations of the Roman walls were used. The city was further

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361 175 broken up by the formation of new districts, often at some distance from the original town centre. In isolated parts and on the slopes of the mountain, where nature is conducive to prayer and meditation, many convents and madrasahs were erected; although several of these have been destroyed and others are disused and in ruins, about fifty have survived until the present time, while others again have been converted and incorporated in more recent buildings.

361 344 172 In the Moslem sector of the old town is the Maristan of Nur ad-Din, "one of the most famous hospitals of the Moslem world". It is of great architectural interest, but is unfortunately spoilt by the modern buildings which now surround it. The doorway has a rich and original alveolate decoration, a classical pediment and a beautiful pair of doors. Over the entrance hall is a small ribbed onion dome, surmounted by a sort of truncated conical drum, made up of superimposed alveoles which are visible even from the outside, as in the case of the brick tomb of Zobeide near Baghdad. In the courtyard, with its two beautiful iwans (halls), fragments of inscriptions, lattice-work and marble inlay have been preserved.

361 346 172 The Nuriya Madrasah, to the south of the Great Mosque, has a similar dome above the mausoleum. Its doorway is distinguished by the pendant keystone motif, also to be seen at the Adiliya Madrasah, a "masterpiece of stereotomy and bonding" planned and constructed in the architectural style and by the methods characteristic of northern Syria. This latter madrasah, a fitting building for the headquarters of the Arab Academy, has been very carefully restored and rearranged. This building, together with the Zahiriya Madrasah (now the National Library), the house of Saladin's father, which was converted by the Sultan Beibars into a memorial college, and the Aziziya Madrasah (Saladin's tomb) form a fine architectural group to the north of the Great Mosque; these buildings are still adorned by a wealth of ancient works of art, inscriptions, mosaics, doors and windows.

The twofold influence of Mesopotamia and northern Syria can be seen in the art of the period of Nur ad-Din and Saladin.

Various mausolea are to be found outside the old town itself and slightly to the north, in the area between the river and the modern thoroughfare called Baghdad Street. That of Zayn ad-Din (Sitt ech-Châm, 1172), is the oldest example of such a building with a sepulchral dome surmounting two drums; the "Sultan Hasan" Mausoleum has a ribbed dome and an interesting decoration of stucco and painting; the Chamiya Madrasah, standing outside the city walls, contains one of the finest examples of plaster moulding in Damascus, beautiful inscriptions and the armatures of the old leaded-glass windows. The Mausoleum of Ibn al-Moqaddam, Emir of Aleppo, is a typical north Syrian structure. Further to the east and of more recent date stands the At-Tawba Mosque, planned and arranged on the same lines as the Omayyad Mosque, and interesting on account of its architecture and decoration (doorway, mihrab, leaded-glass windows, etc.).

The suburb of Salihiyah grew up on the mountain side round a fine group of mausolea, madrasahs and convents, most of which are now abandoned or used for somewhat unsuitable purposes. There, in a picturesque spot on the Nahr Yazid, we find the remains of a colonnaded portico of the oldest convent-madrasah of Salihiyah, together with a whole series of monuments built by eminent persons at the court of Nur ad-Din and Saladin. Most of them are mausolea with brick domes, some ribbed and others double, surmounting two drums decorated with arcading and lobate or twin niches. Many of them contain beautiful carved wooden tombs, old leaded-glass windows and

p. 15 A

361 lintels decorated with graceful inscriptions and coats of arms.

346 172 The Mozaffari Mosque, built in 1202, is decorated in a particularly interesting and original manner; it is the oldest Ayyubid Mosque, and its plan is reminiscent of the Omayyad Mosque. Ancient columns, with their capitals, have been used to form the arcades round the courtyard. The carved wooden lintels (with incised geometrical designs) over the seven doors of the prayer hall are well preserved; two of them are still surmounted by plaster lattice-work. Inside, several windows have beautiful old glass panes.

Also worthy of mention is the Atabakiya Madrasah, built to house the tomb of Princess Tarkan-Khatoun, with its fine doorway decorated with alveoles, which today, owing to the concealment of the corner column by more recent structures, looks as if it were in recess. The arrangement of the alveoles, the bonding of the arch-stones of the arcade and the modelling of the cornices show originality, but are somewhat primitive.

This part of the town subsequently developed and spread very considerably, taking in neighbouring districts such as the Kurd quarter, in Saladin's time, and the Mohadjirine at the end of the nineteenth century. Today, this suburb centres round the Mohiy ad-Din Mosque, built by Sultan Selim in 1518 over the tomb of the famous mystic. This mosque, which also contains the tomb of Abd el-Kader, has a beautiful minaret and very striking faience decorations.

MAMELUKE PERIOD

361 195 At the beginning of the Mameluke period, Damascus developed and expanded further; its products were highly esteemed and, in order to meet the demands of the time, the city developed its art industries, specializing in luxury articles. Even the Crusades promoted its commercial relations with the Western world; like Aleppo, Damascus traded with southern France, Genoa, Pisa and Venice. Its artistic products, such as silks, bronze ornaments, Damascene blades, enamel-work and glassware were in demand everywhere. As a result of this commercial activity, its suqs spread to the north of the Citadel, in the horse-market area, where the Yelbogha Mosque was built in 1264.

Following the example of the Sultans of Cairo, governors, military leaders and their servants then built a great many madrasahs (schools for the teaching of the Koran) and mausolea. The favourite sites for the latter were along the road to Mecca "so that the founder might benefit from the prayers of passing pilgrims". Thus a new suburb, called the meidan, sprang up along this road, reflecting the special features of the pilgrim traffic and trade. The meidan, about two miles in length, was linked with the city by a new group of suqs (Es-Sinaniyeh) outside the western gate of the wall, between the districts of Chagur and Qasr el-Hajjaj; it absorbed the suburban village of El-Qbeybat ("little domes"), and ended at Bab-Allah (Allah's Gate), whence pilgrims "set out on their journey to the Holy House of God".

361 346 172 It would take too long to give a complete list of the Mameluke monuments existing in these districts; even the directory of the Antiquities Service does not include them all. Very often a minaret, a fountain or a madrasah, although not classified, is of considerable interest, because it adds to the atmosphere of the place, or because it has certain original features, though these are often not very obvious, owing to the conversion of the building for another purpose or to bad restoration.

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361 designed on the same lines as the Omayyad Mosque; it is re-
346 markable for the beautiful structure of its niches and
172 windows with their alveolate decoration, its magnificent bands
of plaster moulding, and its windows, doorways and minaret. This mosque well deserves to be set off to greater advantage.

Tingiz, the Viceroy of Syria, was responsible for the construction of a fine group of buildings. Only the beautiful minaret and two doorways of the mosque which bears his name still remain after the rebuilding of the An-Nassr Avenue, but the double mausoleum of his w . (Turba Kukabaiya) and, a little further on, the Dar al-Hadit, a school where the traditions of the Prophet were expounded, are still to be seen in the "Street called Straight".

The last monuments of this period are the two beautiful tiered minarets in the Bab Jabiya suq, with their rich decoration, and that of the Al-Moallaq Mosque, with an unbroken line of black stones encircling its niches and rose windows.

OTTOMAN PERIOD

361 The end of the Mameluke period was marked by a serious eco-
● 175 nomic crisis, aggravated by disturbances and devastation
(Tamerlane), and also by the Portuguese discoveries, which altered the traditional trade routes. With the rise of the Ottoman Empire, which expanded Damascus's economic and political frontiers, the city again began to develop. Under the capitulations, Turkish ports were opened to European merchants. Moreover, since pilgrims set out from Damascus on their journey to Mecca, the city was expected to supply them with the necessary equipment and provisions for their crossing of the desert.

These circumstances led to the building of many khans, with their porticoed courtyards, shops and stables on the ground floor and accommodation for travellers on the floor above. The city was no longer of any strategic or military importance; the ramparts, already useless on account of the town's extension and the formation of suburbs without the walls, were abandoned; the moats filled in and the Citadel fell into ruins. The pasha (governor), with his entourage of Turkish aristocrats, took up his residence and administered business at the seraglio, outside the ramparts, at a place called Qanawat (the canals), near the Roman aqueduct.

361 In the same neighbourhood were erected the two great
346 imperial madrasahs, the Solaymaniya (1554), constructed by the
172 famous Turkish architect, Sinan, who built the Sulaymaniya
in Constantinople, and the Salimiya (1566), designed by a Persian architect. With their great buttressed domes, surrounded by a double row of small domes covering the porticoes and rooms, their slender pencil-like minarets tapering to a cone, and the surrounding gardens with their fountains, trees and flowers, they achieve an architectural unity and a highly characteristic atmosphere of their own, in a style native to Constantinople and readily transplanted to Damascus.

The Solaymaniya has a rich variety of architectural and decorative motifs, characteristic of that period and style, such as marble inlaid work and great overlays of faience tiles on the walls and tympana of the doors and windows; keel arches with alternate black and white arch-stones; abundant use of stalactites, niches ornamented with overlapping shell designs, lintels with many-coloured interlocking voussoirs, forming increasingly ornate and complicated patterns. The capitals

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16: Collart et al G-5 (1953) 1954 MDI Syria MDI

Damascus

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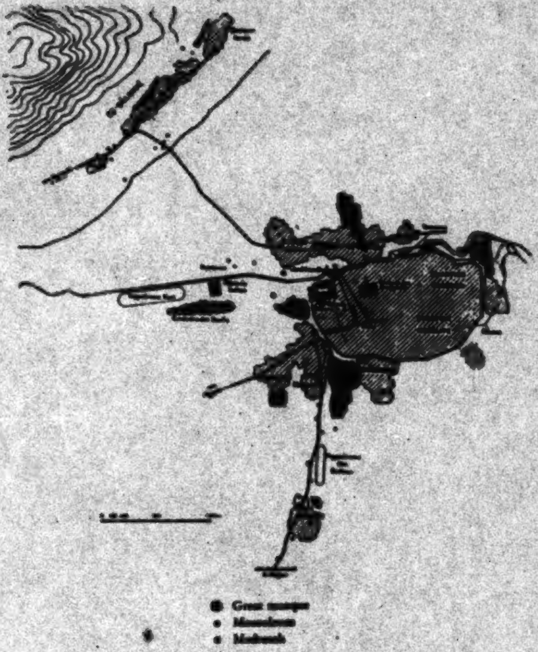
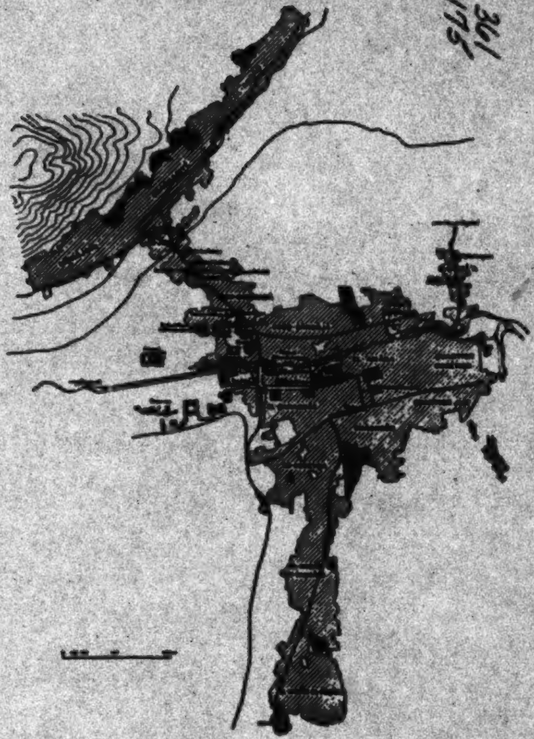

● Great mosque
• Mausoleum
• Madrasah

Damascus in the eleventh century.



Damascus today.

(From J. Sauvaget, *Revue des études islamiques*, IV, 1934.)

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shown in the table above are found in other parts of the Middle East but three indigenous sects need mention here: the Druzes, who are a mountain people professing a religion which derived from Islam in the eleventh century A.D., but became independent; the Alawis of the mountains behind Latakia, whose religion appears to be a dogmatic form of Shii Islam with some survivals of Christian ritual; and the Maronites, who are a Christian sect, living mainly in the north of Lebanon.

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The religion of the majority of Syrians and of the head of the Syrian state is Sunni Islam; in the Lebanon, Muslims and Christians are fairly evenly divided and the President of the Republic is a Maronite Christian and the Prime Minister a Sunni Muslim. The Christians of the Arab Levant have provided the Middle East with great leaders in journalism, letters, politics, and science, but in present-day Syria the Christians are mainly prominent in commerce and industry. There is hardly any dangerous animosity between the sects, but sectarian bonds are a very real force in the lives of people who for so long lived under the Turkish *millet* system whereby each sect was an administrative unit, the head of which exercised considerable authority.

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So mixed a population living in a variety of environments naturally does not constitute one physical type, but some generalizations are hazarded for the sake of a fuller picture. Dark hair is almost universal but the skin of the town dweller is no darker than that of a Mediterranean European; the Syrians and Lebanese are not often as tall or as heavy as the average Englishman but they mature at an earlier age. The poorer nomad eats mainly bread, with milk and fruit and vegetables as less frequent additions and meat as an event, but in the towns and villages most people eat a full diet with rather more oil and spice than is used in Britain. The cultivator and the nomad wear local costumes but most townspeople wear European clothes; the tarbush or the head-cloth are usual but not universal headgear for men. Most Muslim women wear the veil, but in the towns the richer women are becoming more and more emancipated and, particularly in Beirut, many lead the same lives as Christian women. In Lebanon and in Damascus and Aleppo the way of life is very like that in southern Europe, and both countries make a pleasant home for a European.

HISTORY

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Semitic-speaking people have inhabited for four or five millennia the area which is known historically as Syria, an
yet for much of this period the rulers of what is now Syria an

3:Royal Institute of International Affairs U-4 (no date)1954 M1 Middle

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Lebanon were foreigners. Today it is still possible to see near Beirut the traces of the successive conquerors—Egyptians, Hittites, Assyrians, Persians, Alexander the Great, and, in the first century B.C., Rome. The Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire was supplanted by the Arab Muslim conquest which took Damascus in A.D. 635. The Arab invaders gave the people of Syria their name, their religion, and their language, but the rulers also learned much from their new subjects, and it was from Damascus that the Umayyad Caliphs ruled Islam from 661 to 750. Many of the chief servants of the Umayyads were Syrian-born and, of these, many were Christians, so that this period might be considered one of Syrian independence; but in 750 the Caliphate passed to the Abbasids who made their capital in Iraq. Syria fell under different foreign rulers as the power passed successively to Abbasids, Fatimids, Ayyubids, Crusaders, and Mamelukes (with Mongol incursions) until, in 1516, the Ottoman Empire took possession of the land.

The Ottoman Empire

Under the rule of the Turks, Syria produced little save taxes for the Porte and emoluments for the pashas. The corrupt rule of most of these governors aimed at personal enrichment and made little attempt to control the land beyond gunshot of the citadels or to advance the social or economic state of those they governed. From the sixteenth to the eighteenth century what local prosperity there was occurred when some local leader succeeded in making himself autonomous in defiance of the remote authority of the Ottoman Sultan; the classic case is the reign of the Druze Amir Fakhr ad-Din al-Maani (1536–1635) who encouraged agriculture and trade with Europe. Such autonomy was naturally more easily achieved in the Christian and Druze fastnesses of the Lebanese mountains than in the cities of inner Syria; there the Ottomans maintained their authority by exploiting the rivalry of sects and class, and so contributed to the impermanence and lack of solidarity which persist as a feature of contemporary public life. This fragmentation of society is even more characteristic of Lebanon, since in the mid-nineteenth century a social conflict between the resurgent Maronite peasantry and their Druze overlords was not only exploited by the Ottoman authorities but also became a factor in the struggle between France and Britain to control the Levant. The conflict culminated in a civil war which led the Powers in 1861 to obtain from the Ottoman Sultan the establishment of the autonomous Sanjaq of Lebanon (excluding the then predominantly Muslim cities of Beirut, Tripoli, and Sidon)

3:Royal Institute of International Affairs U-4 (no date)1954 M1 Middle East
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under a Christian governor. Already for one generation, after the interruption caused by the Napoleonic Wars, missionaries from Western Christendom had been laying the foundations of an intellectual revival—chiefly among the Lebanese Christians, but also in the Syrian cities; and the foundation in 1866 of the Syrian Protestant College (renamed in 1920 the American University of Beirut) is a landmark in the early history of Arab nationalism. Religious minorities thus acquired the habit of looking to some Western patron for material support and for protection against the majority of their neighbours and their governors; thus the Maronites depended on France, the Orthodox on Imperial Russia, the local Jews on the Alliance Israélite and on Britain, the Protestants on the United States, Britain, or Germany. Emigration to the Americas or Europe further opened the cultural windows of Christian Lebanon and emigrants to Egypt founded there a modern Arabic literature, while the granting of public utility concessions, especially for railways, to French companies and others increased the Western interest in the country.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, the Young Turks, who were at first supported by the leaders of the early Arab nationalism, rose to power; but it soon became apparent that the Young Turk was to be as much a despot as the Sultan. The Arab intelligentsia of Beirut and Damascus chose, therefore, to look to the Western Powers for support[1]—a decision which they may well now be regretting. The Ottoman Governor of Syria, Jamal Pasha, carried out a drastic 'purge' of the urban nationalist leaders in 1916, but the nationalist cause had been taken up at a safer distance by the Sharif Hussain of Mecca and his sons Faisal and Abdullah, who had been in correspondence with the British authorities in Egypt since before the outbreak of the First World War.[2] Their Arab Revolt was a response to Jamal Pasha's purge and the prospect of similar measures in the Hejaz. Brilliantly organized by Colonel T. E. Lawrence, it effectively harassed the left wing of the Ottoman front on the desert margin while Allenby was breaking the main resistance in the Palestine campaign. When the Ottoman front collapsed after the British victory at Megiddo, a small body of Arabs from the Amir Faisal's army were the first to reach Damascus. Faisal was given authority by General Allenby over all territory east of the Jordan, down to Aqaba, but by the Arabs he was regarded rather as an independent amir on the throne of the Umayyads. However, Faisal had scarcely appoint-

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[1] See George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (London, Hamilton, 1946).

[2] For this section see above, pp. 17–18.

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S L 175 ed a governor for Lebanon before the latter was displaced by the French (whose historic interests in Lebanon had been recognized by the British Government in the correspondence with the Sharif Hussain). While Faisal and Lawrence were presenting the Arab case to the Paris Peace Conference, the French were consolidating their military hold on the Levant. Eventually Faisal and Clemenceau came to a provisional agreement for an autonomous Syrian state under the tutelage of France (as conceded by Britain in the secret Sykes–Picot Agreement of 1916, which had not been communicated at the time to the Sharif and his sons); but French tutelage was not acceptable to the Damascus politicians who in March 1920 proclaimed Faisal King of an independent Syrian state. In the following month, however, the French obtained Britain's agreement, at the San Remo Conference, to their exercising a Mandate over Syria as well as Lebanon; the new Mandatary defeated Faisal's little army at Maisalun on 25 July 1920 and entered into possession of Damascus, from which Faisal fled into exile.

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The French Mandate, 1920–45

Since Crusader times, France had been interested in protecting the Christians of the Levant, and the twentieth century gave her the added incentive of creating a counter-balance to Britain's growing influence in the Middle East. The Maronites welcomed the French, and the latter accordingly expanded the small area of the Sanjaq of Lebanon to include the cities of Beirut, Tripoli, and Sidon, as well as the Biqaa, so as to give this 'Greater Lebanon' the largest possible area in which there would be no danger of a Muslim majority. The French applied to Syria the principle of *divide et impera* and four separate states were set up: that of the Alawis (Jebel Ansariya, including Latakia), that of the Jebel Druze, and Damascus and Aleppo (in 1925 combined into a single state of Syria). The French further encouraged separatism in the Jezira, and designated the area of Antioch and Alexandretta (in which the largest linguistic community was the Turkish) as an autonomous sanjaq.

S L 648 669 The majority of Syrians never readily accepted French rule and risings occurred in the Ansariya, near Aleppo, and near Dair az-Zor; these were soon put down but a greater rebellion began in the Jebel Druze in 1925 and spread to Damascus and to Hama. The French bombarded Damascus in October 1925 and in May 1926 but did not succeed in completely quelling the revolt until August 1927. Thereafter negotiations for a treaty stumbled through the years, punctuated by disturbances, broken off from time to time and marked throughout by bitter-

72:McFadden J-5 (1951-52)1953 MI Middle East MI
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during this period. Two other Damascus owner editors, Najib Rayyis of *Al Qabas* and Wajih Hafiar of *Al Insha*, expressed similar views. Nevertheless, according to Asseh, the newspapers kept pressing for still more freedom.

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It probably should be interpolated here that the prestige of the National Bloc was declining toward the end of this period and that criticism of it was on the increase. Its position became very shaky after the middle of 1948, when the Syrian Army in the Palestine War failed to live up to the public's high expectations of it and when this was blamed on corruption among the politicians in power. Asseh said an attempt was made in 1948 to adopt a press law which would have limited freedom greatly, but there were public demonstrations and this cabinet fell. A reference source[1] indicates that factors other than this attempt to adopt a new press law caused the fall of this cabinet on December 1, 1948. It turned out that this marked the start of a period of tremendous instability in government in Syria which endured down at least to the survey and which forms an important part of the background against which Syrian attempts to reform the press through government must be judged. Below is a brief review of these changes:[2]

December 17, 1948-March 30, 1949—After a 17-day crisis, a cabinet headed by Khalid al-Azm is formed and remains in power during this period of less than four months.

March 30-August 14, 1949—Army-suppprted coup d'état brings government headed by Brig. Gen. Husni Za'im to power. Chamber is dissolved and constitution of Second Republic of Syria is suspended. Za'im is elected President late in the period in elections held after political parties have been suppressed by decree. Before regime has been in power four months it is overthrown by a second army-supported coup d'état led by Col. Sami Hinnawi.

August 14-December 19, 1949—Hinnawi, as Commander-in-Chief of the Army, is an important political figure throughout this period, but the administration of the government is placed in the hands of a provisional civilian cabinet headed by Hashim al-Atasi. This cabinet governs by decree, pending the election of a constituent assembly to draft a new constitution. Elections are held in November and on December 13 the provisional cabinet resigns, the intention being to permit the recently elected constituent assembly to select a new government. However, before this can be accomplished a third, army-supported coup d'état occurs, this one led by Lt. Col. Adib al-Shishakli.

December 19, 1949-May 29, 1950—Although Shishakli, either as deputy chief of staff and later chief of staff of the Syrian Army, remains an important political figure from this time on, the movement toward restoration of constitutional government is continued. The recently elected constituent assembly is not dissolved. It elects Hashim al-Atasi provisional president of Syria and proceeds with the work of drafting a new constitution. It takes until December

[1] *The Middle East*, op. cit., p. 396.

[2] Names, dates and much of the material taken from Chronology of Events sections of *Middle East Journal*. Vols. 3, 4, 5 and 6 cover this period. This was supplemented to some extent by material collected during the survey.

72:McFadden J-5 (1951-52)1953 Ml Middle East Ml
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28, nine days after the coup, to put together a provisional cabinet, acceptable both to the Army and the politically divided assembly. This cabinet, headed by Khalid al-Azm, then manages to govern until May 29, when it is forced out after about five months in power.

May 29-September 8, 1950—After a prolonged cabinet crisis, which really began on May 10 when the previous cabinet resigned and then withdrew its resignation for a few more days, a cabinet of caretakers, headed by Nazim al-Qudzi is put together. The understanding is that it will attempt to govern until the new constitution can be completed. This is accomplished and the constitution of the Third Republic of Syria is adopted on December 5. Provisional President Hashim al-Atasi is elected President on that date, and the constituent assembly becomes the Chamber of Deputies. The provisional cabinet resigns and Nazim al-Qudzi is asked to form a new cabinet, which he does on September 8. This cabinet is dominated by members of the People's Party, which in the elections of the previous year had been assured of control over 40-to-50 votes in the 114-member assembly. It wins a vote of confidence on September 11 of 63 to 5, which gives some indication of the delicate balance with which this and subsequent constitutional governments must attempt to govern.

September 8, 1950-March 10, 1951—With constitutional government now fully restored, the first cabinet headed by Nazim al-Qudzi under the Third Republic manages to stay in power five months before it is forced out.

March 10-July 31, 1951—After the Populist cabinet resigns on March 10, there is a crisis lasting until March 27, before Khalid al-Azm manages to form a coalition cabinet. It wins a vote of confidence of 50-0 on April 7, and attempts to govern with his shaky majority which is not really a majority and with the People's Party bloc in opposition. It lasts until July 31, about four months.

July 31-November 7, 1951—There is a prolonged crisis here, which actually began about July 19 and lasted until August 9, when Hasan al-Hakim, an independent, finally manages to put together a cabinet dominated by members of the People's Party. It lasts less than four months before it resigns as a result of divisions within the cabinet itself.

November 7-November 29—This 3-week period marks the longest cabinet crisis Syria has yet seen. Various leaders try and fail to form a cabinet. On November 28 one appears to be on the verge of being formed. It is scheduled to consist of seven Populists, two independents and one member of the Socialist Front. The head of it is to be Dr. Ma'ruf al-Dawalibi, a Populist who has visited Moscow, who is reported to be pro-Russian, and who also is reputed to have Moslem Brotherhood connections. In the negotiations leading up to the formation of his proposed cabinet Dawalibi has held out for and is scheduled to hold the Ministry of Defense portfolio as well as the Prime Ministership. Col. Fawzi al-Silo, a supporter of Shishakli, had been Minister of Defense in the previous four cabinets, whether they were Populist-dominated or coalitions not dominated by the Populists. Before this proposed Dawalibi cabinet can take office, Syria's fourth coup d'état in two years occurs. It is led by Col. Adib al-Shishakli, who led the previous coup of December 19, 1949, largely in an effort to bloc a People's Party project

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1 M 204 5 204 175 for union of Syria with Hashimite Iraq, but who then retired from a position of great public prominence and permitted the effort to restore constitutional government to continue.

November 29, 1951 to ?—For a few days after Shishakli took power in his second coup he made some effort to permit the constitution to continue to function. Dawalibi, most of the members of his proposed cabinet and various People's Party leaders were arrested by Syrian Army forces under Shishakli's command on November 29, but the Chamber was not immediately dissolved. In fact, on December 1 it was announced that President Atasi, who was under house arrest, had asked Hamid al-Khuja to form a cabinet. On December 2 came the announcement that Atasi had resigned, the Chamber had been dissolved, and Shishakli had been proclaimed Chief of State. The following day Col. Fawzi al-Silo was named Prime Minister and Minister of Defense.

1 M 204 5 204 Syria's first major experiment at press reform came under the Za'im regime. The power of government, which was ruling by decree, was used to reduce the number of daily papers in Syria to ten, compared to the thirty or more which had been normal for all Syria for some years before and after World War II. The papers which were suspended were compensated for their loss. Syrians disagree as to the fairness with which this reduction in numbers was handled and as to its real purpose.

Aseeh said Za'im appreciated the value of propaganda and was setting out to turn the press into a propaganda instrument which could be tightly controlled by the state. The papers which were permitted to live became "official," he said, and unfavorable comment and criticism were prevented and there was virtually no press freedom. Spiro al-'Isa, editor of *Alef Ba*, one of the Damascus papers permitted to live, said that the reduction in numbers was handled fairly and that it did not wipe out an opposition press. The objective, as he and others explained it, was to reduce competition to a point where papers could live on circulation and advertising revenues and stop depending on secret funds.

To a degree this apparently succeeded. Circulations seem to have risen to a point where all of them should have been making money, according to the kind of calculations which were explained in Chapter IV. Sources disagreed on how much circulations rose, but the maximum estimates would put the total collective daily circulation of the Za'im period far under the total which preceded and followed this period.

Za'im was in power less than four months before he was assassinated in the coup which followed his coup, and this is too short a period to indicate much about how any sort of an experiment with the press was going to work out. Its mixed motivations, however, seem to be quite clear. There was probably a sincere desire to reform the press. The effort took the form it did as a result of the widespread belief that there were too many papers,